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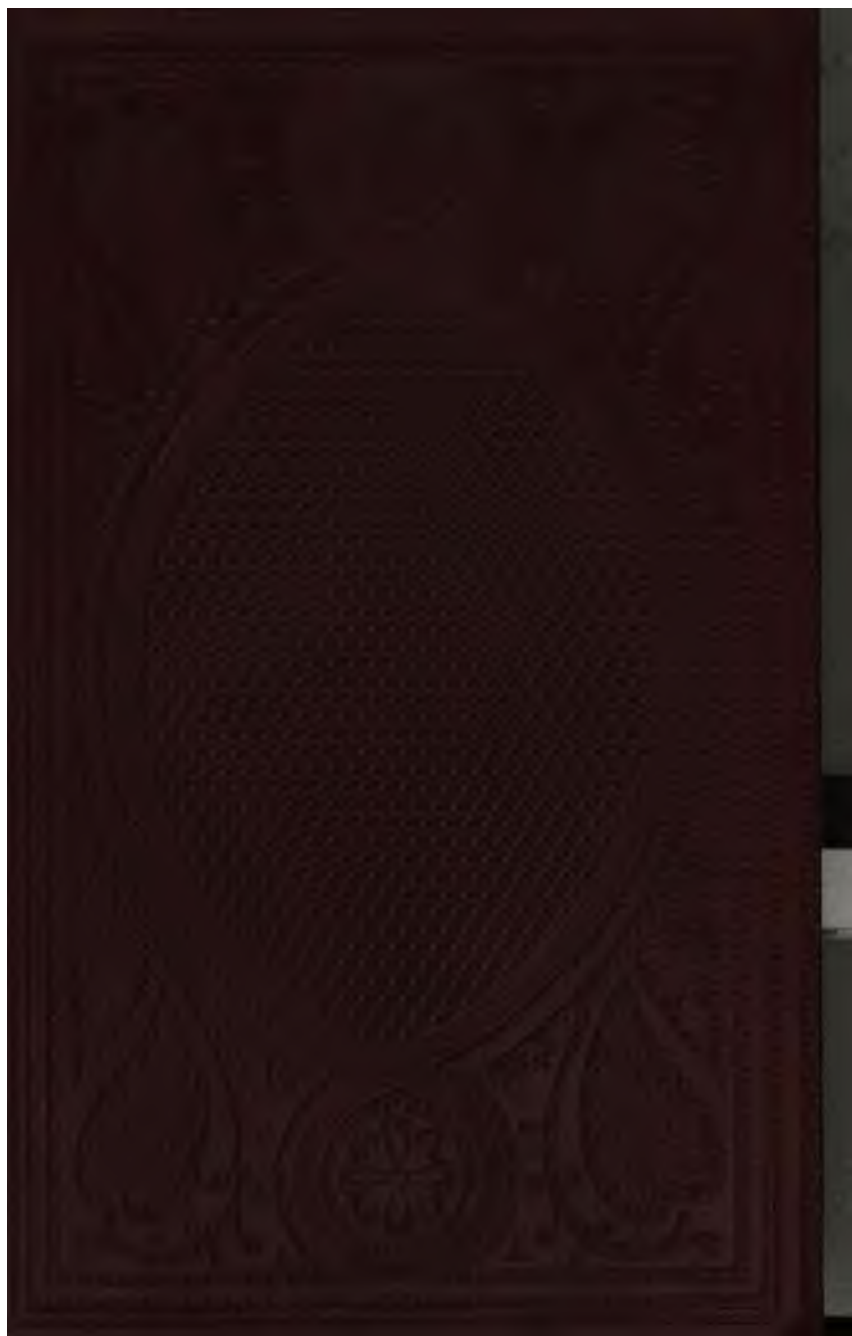
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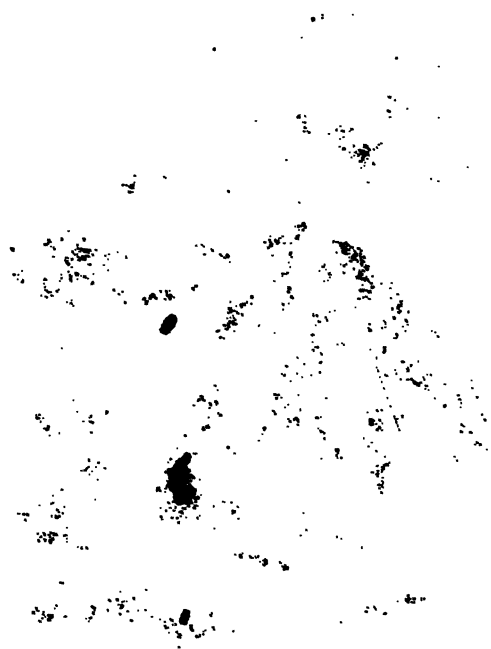


**THE NEST HUNTERS.**









WEST HUNT FISHING

THE WEST HUNT FISHING

W. H. HUNT FISHING

W. H. HUNT FISHING

LONDON

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TO

EDWIN CANTON, ESQ. F.R.C.S.

SURGEON TO THE CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL,

SURGEON TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM,

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THIS BOOK

IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS VERY SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E.

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IN the Nest Hunters, as in the rest of his stories of adventure in Asia—a series in which the author feels some degree of pride, since they have gained for him so large an audience; and for the success of which, by the way, he now makes his very grateful acknowledgments both to reviewers and readers—his object has been to describe countries, and picture manners, customs, and superstitions of races, hitherto but little known in books of the kind. To effect this object, he has blended, or rather interlaced, fact with fiction; yet where the one ends or the other begins it would be difficult to describe, since, with the exception of the characters themselves,



KATIS SURPRISE AT OUR NOVEL COSTUME.

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# THE NEST HUNTERS.



## CHAPTER I.

### AN IMPORTANT LETTER.

“NEWS from Uncle Adam!” cried my brother Martin, as the maid, one morning, placed upon the breakfast-table a letter, bearing a foreign post-mark; and the words are still fresh in my memory, for that epistle influenced the fates of my father, brother, and myself. It was addressed to our parent, in reply to one he had sent to Batavia, some twelve months before.

! “My dear brother Claud,” it ran, “I have received yours, containing the sad intelligence of the death of your poor wife, and the almost simultaneous loss of your fortune, through the failure of that rogue of a banker. I will not, however, waste time in words of condolence, but at once proceed to business. Well, *you* are poor—*I* am rich; you

have *no* occupation—I have *too much*. You are young—I am getting old; for there are many years' difference in our ages. Thus, in more ways than one, we may assist each other. *I* can help you with money, and you can help brother Adam by employing your energies in his commercial affairs out here in Batavia. But, as deeds are better than words, I herewith inclose a bill at sight upon Browning's, in Lombard Street; and beg that you will, with all convenient speed, take passage for yourself and my two nephews for this island.

“Yours, my dear brother, lovingly,

“ADAM BLAKE.

“P.S.—I am sorry to add, that I cannot offer you and the boys a home in my house, as I am no longer a lonely man, my chief reason for marrying again being for the sake of my dear little Lip-lap, your niece.”

“Won't it be a jolly voyage! How good of Uncle Adam!” cried Martin.

“A second wife,” murmured my father sadly, as if pondering upon his own bereavement.

“I wonder,” said I, “what our cousin is like, and why Uncle Adam calls her Lip-lap—Lip-lap, what can it mean?”

“A nick-name given to the children of Europeans born in Java, Claud,” answered my father.

“Queer,” said my brother. “But it is no matter

what they call her so that she is pretty—I like pretty girls.”

“ All of which we shall discover when we reach Java,” replied our father. “ But now, boys, get you to your lessons, while *I* go to make inquiries about a ship.”

“ I say, Claud, won't it be jolly? Father will be rich again, and we shall grow up to be great merchants, like Uncle Adam, and have a cousin, too,” said Martin merrily; but as the thought passed through his mind that the death of our dear mother had been caused chiefly by our father's misfortunes, he burst into tears. “ Oh! why did God take from us poor dear mamma? Why didn't this letter come ever so many months ago, and she would have lived!”

Heaven knew that I had felt our loss as deeply as my brother; but for his sake, for the sake of my father, who had never smiled since her death, and who trembled at a word or a thing that brought it fresh again to his memory, I had struggled to suppress any sign of emotion at the chance mentioning of her name. Then throwing my arms around his neck, I said (I believe with tears in my own eyes):

“ Martin, it is wicked to be ever recurring to our loss, when you know how it shocks our father. Remember, mamma is in heaven, and happy.”

“ I know it is wicked, but I cannot help it—

I *won't* help it—I never *will* stop talking of dear mamma!" and the passionate boy ran from the sitting-room into our sleeping chamber, and, throwing himself upon the bed, sought relief in a good cry.

Since our mother's death, such outbreaks of grief had been common with my warm-hearted but impulsive brother. Our uncle's letter, however, produced a good effect upon his mind, by directing his thoughts to the active, perhaps adventurous, life which seemed before us. But unfortunately we had to wait six months before we could get a ship—a loss of time that, as will be seen hereafter, materially influenced our future. Taking into account this delay, the six months for the coming of the letter, and a similar period for our outward voyage, it will be seen that a year and a half elapsed between the penning of our uncle's invitation and our anchoring in the roadstead of Batavia. What unexpected events, what misfortunes, may happen in eighteen months! and they did happen.

Ominous, indeed, of misfortune was the night of our arrival in the island. It was the latter end of October, the period of the monsoons. My brother and I were well-nigh frightened to death, most assuredly we never expected to reach the land, for the elements were at war. The sea rose in mountainous heights; the horizon was spread

with vast sheets of livid flame ; the thunder shook both heaven and earth ; and the wind, as it rushed inland in its fury, uprooted the largest trees, and toppled down the huts of peasants and the warehouses of the merchants in the lower town. It was a mercy, indeed, that even the great pier which forms the harbour of Batavia should have escaped.

The hurricane, however, although terrible in its fury, was but of short duration ; for by daybreak we were enabled to moor the vessel alongside the pier, and also to procure a messenger, whom my father at once dispatched to advise his brother of our arrival.

“ If that is Batavia, it is a queer dirty hole,” said Martin, shrugging his shoulders, as he stood gazing upon the bamboo huts of the poor natives, the warehouses of the Dutch merchants, and the thousands of bales of goods, covered with tarpauling, which seemed to block up and render the roadways impassable.

“ Right, lad,” said the captain, who was standing near my brother ; “ it is a queer dirty hole. Moreover, it is worse than it seems, for after sunset the vapours and putrid exhalations, arising from the decaying vegetable and animal matter in the marshes, where you see yonder mangroves, render it poisonous to Europeans.”

“ And we have to live there,” said Martin,



with a shudder. "Yet," he added thoughtfully, "it can't kill everybody, for Uncle Adam has lived in it many years."

"Not so, my lad. Like the other European merchants, your uncle quits this place every evening at six o'clock, for his home in the upper town in yonder mountain, where you will find large streets, a healthy atmosphere, the Government-house and offices, the theatre, and the grand residences of the principal colonists."

"That is good news," said I, for I had been as nervous as my brother at the prospect of having to live in such a wretched place as the town before us; "but," I added, "where is the Chinese city, for I have heard that those people abound in Java?"

"Ay, my man, the Chinese swarm in Java, as in every island of the Indian Archipelago where money is to be made. Their town, however, or campong, as they term it, is situated upon the other side of the mountain, in a spot almost as unwholesome as this."

At this moment we saw our messenger, accompanied by another native, come along the quay towards the ship. But as the latter will prove no unimportant personage in my narrative, I will describe his appearance. Taller in stature than the majority of his diminutive race, he was yet far shorter than the average height of Englishmen ;

his complexion was a light brown ; his eyes full, black, and piercing ; his hair not luxuriant, like many of the Asiatic races, but yet not so scanty as most of the men of Java. He was well set, and his limbs strong and muscular, as if he had been trained among the fishing or hunting tribes. His dress consisted of a pair of thin cotton drawers and coloured sarong, or long plaid-like scarf, which was thrown across the shoulder, and brought around the waist, so as to form a sash or girdle, from which was suspended the kris, or creese, a weapon without which no Indian islander of whatever rank is ever seen ; and but that his upper teeth were filed and blackened, he would have been accounted among Europeans a man of no mean personal appearance.

“He is a slave, or servant of your uncle’s,” said my father. “Say,” he added, impatiently, as the man trod the deck, “bring you letter or message from the counsellor Van Black ?”

“My master,” he replied, bending his body forward, while at the same time he raised his hands with the palms joined before his face, until the thumbs touched his nose, “I bring no letter, no message ; but yet a carriage awaits upon the quay, to convey your honour to the house of the counsellor Van Black, where, I am bidden to say, you and your sons will find a welcome.”

“No message, no letter !” repeated my father,

in surprise. "It is strange that, after a parting of so many years, Adam came not himself to welcome us. Tell me, man," he added, "how fares it with your master and his family? Are they in health?"

"The family," replied the native, emphasizing the word, and making another obeisance, "are as well as their best friends would wish them. But, craving your pardon, Prabu is charged to convey the noble stranger and his sons to the upper town; to do that, and nothing more. He is a servant, and must obey."

"Astounding! What can be the meaning of this?" replied my father, thoughtfully; but finding it was of no use to further question Prabu as he had called himself, he said, turning to us two boys, "Come, lads, let us follow this fellow, for the sooner we reach my brother's house the sooner we shall be free from suspense."

"Our uncle is ill—too ill to come or write; but fearing to alarm you, has forbidden this man to open his lips," said Martin, offering the best explanation of Prabu's taciturnity.

"I fear so, indeed," replied my father. "The greater reason, then, that we should hasten to him; so forward, my sons."

I had also my own fears, and an explanation to offer, but as they passed through my mind, a chilling sensation at my heart seemed to freeze the words,

ere they could escape my lips, and so I followed in silence to a great clumsy old Dutch coach, with four Java ponies, that was awaiting us on the quay.

Now, the road from the lower to the upper town is steep and narrow. Thus on our way we should have been amused by the opportunity the ascent gave of looking at the surrounding scenery, so new to us, and the multitude of quaintly-dressed people of all ranks, on foot and in all descriptions of vehicles, who were proceeding to their places of business in the wretched city we had just quitted; but a species of melancholy foreboding seemed to have seized upon us, which obscured our eyes, turned our thoughts inwardly, and reined in our tongues, for neither spoke, until the carriage stopped before the court-yard of a large flat-roofed mansion in the upper town.

Perceiving that the gates stood open, my father, who could no longer bridle his impatience, descended from the carriage, telling us to follow. As we did so, Martin, touching me on the shoulder, and speaking for the first time since we had entered the vehicle, said :

“ This is very queer, Claud. What do you make of it ? ”

“ Martin, I have a foreboding that something is wrong, very wrong ; calamity is in store for us ; the storm upon our arrival last night was ominous. Besides, to my thinking, mystery is seated upon

the mahogany-coloured countenance of that fellow Prabu. Look even now, how he is straining his glittering eyes after us."

"Pooh, pooh, Claud, don't croak; you make a fellow shiver," replied my brother.

By this time we overtook our father, at the portico of the mansion. Here the mystery was heightened, for no uncle stood there to welcome his relatives, but in his place a head servant, or groom of the chamber, who, calling my father by name, invited us to follow him; but now, losing all patience, he rudely seized the man by the shoulder, exclaiming:

"Say, fellow, is my brother, your master, sick, that I see him not here to welcome us?"

"Sir," replied the servant, evasively, "my lady awaits you."

So saying, he threw open the doors of a large and luxuriously furnished apartment, ushering us into the presence of a lady of dignified demeanour, but who seemed almost lost amid a pile of velvet cushions upon which she was reclining, and instantly the mystery was solved, our forebodings realized, for she was attired in widow's weeds.

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed my father, "can it be possible, then, that my brother is—"

"Alas! no more," said the lady, rising and taking his hand. "It is scarcely three months since my poor husband died of the fever." Then,

in soft purring tones, like those of a cat, she added, "It was the will of God ; we may not repine. You will pardon me, my brother, that I forbade my servants to give you this sad news ; but, out of respect to my late husband's memory, I desired to be the first to break to you the sorrowful intelligence, at the same time to bid you and your sons welcome to this house." Then, seeing that our father's heart was too full of grief to reply, she said, as she folded my brother and me, one after the other, in her arms :

"These, then, are my charming nephews ? Let me embrace you, dear boys. You are noble fellows, and shall find as good a home in this house as if your poor dear uncle had been saved to us."

"Madam, my sister," replied my father, "your conduct towards us has been kind and thoughtful, still my grief is too keen and new ; craving your pardon, I would be alone for a time."

"It would have been unpardonable, my brother, had I not foreseen this desire," she replied, striking a small Chinese gong suspended from the ceiling. "Go," she said to the servant who answered the summons, "conduct my brother and his sons to the rooms prepared for them."

The apartments to which we were conducted were situated in another wing of the building, upon the ground-floor, and consisted of two bedrooms and a large sitting-room. They all had French

windows opening into the grounds, and had evidently been carefully and thoughtfully prepared for our reception. Leaving our parent to give full vent to his grief, for the death of a brother to whom he had been passionately attached, we boys (who had never known our uncle, and could not therefore so keenly feel his loss) went to our own chamber, which, by the way, was of ample size, and fitted up as both sitting and bed room.

“ I am so sorry for poor dear uncle, though we never saw him,” said Martin, as soon as we were alone.

“ I am more sorry for our father, Martin. I fear that this fresh stroke of misfortune, coming so soon after our dear mother’s death, will utterly destroy his already weak health.”

“ Nay, Claud, we boys must be his support. Then, you know, it must be consoling even to him to find our new aunt so kind and thoughtful.”

“ New aunt !” I repeated ; then looking cautiously round, and first listening to hear if footsteps were at hand, I said in a whisper, “ Do you know, Martin, I don’t like that woman.”

“ Don’t you, though,” he replied, with a look of astonishment. “ But why ?”

“ Well, I don’t know, but I don’t. You remember the lines poor mother used to repeat to us—

“ ‘ I do not like thee, Doctor Fell,  
The reason why, I cannot tell ;  
But this I do know, very well,  
I do not like thee, Doctor Fell.’ ”

“ Claud,” replied my brother, “ I am beginning to be afraid of you ; you are like a witch. But— but,” he added, “ this is foolish ; it is wicked ; for she is a relation—at least, a kind of a one, you know—and you have no reason to dislike her. But isn’t she pretty, though ?”

“ Pretty ! Well, so is a tigress, so is a serpent, and she reminds me of both ; she puts me in mind of the portrait in that French story-book we used to read at home, of the woman who poisoned so many husbands—just the same plump figure, raven hair, pale skin, dark eyes, that seem to mean everything, under an effort to look as if they meant nothing, and soft hands ; then her embrace was as mock as a play-actor’s, nothing real in it, and her kiss like that of Judas.”

“ Hang it, Claud, it’s a shame ; be quiet, you shall say no more !” exclaimed my brother, placing his hand upon my mouth. And in truth I did feel a little ashamed of this warm expression of opinion upon so short an acquaintance ; nevertheless, I believed in it at the time, and, moreover, that night dreamt that all I had said had come true. But then, you know, there is not much in dreams ; at least, it is foolish to place reliance upon them.



After this conversation, neither spoke for some time. At length the silence was broken by Martin. "Claud," said he, "I wonder how much money our uncle has left to father?"

"Not much, I fear, if our new aunt had any part in making his will."

"Oh! bother; drop talking of *her*. It's a great shame if he hasn't though, after coming all this way by his own invitation."

"Well, we shall soon know all about the will, I dare say," said I, a little shocked that my brother should so soon speak of money affairs; and Martin understood and felt hurt at my thoughts, for he answered:

"It is for our father, who is ill, and has had so much trouble, that I want the money, Claud, not myself; for I am strong and healthy, and, if necessary, shall be able to get my living somehow—for instance, as a clerk, a messenger, a hunter, or anything, you know, out here, where white men are valuable."

"But *you*, Martin, are only a boy."

"And I should like to know whether a *white* boy is not as good as two mahogany-coloured men?" he replied, boastfully.

"Hush! we have been watched—listened to!" for although I had said nothing about it to Martin, I had, several times while we had been conversing, heard a rustling in the shrubbery, just outside the

glass door of our room. Hitherto, I had taken but little notice, but now I distinctly heard a cough.

“Come along then, and let us unearth the sly fox,” whispered Martin; and the next minute we were standing by a shrubbery near the window. Having listened patiently for some time, and heard nothing but the humming of birds and insects, Martin whispered:

“It was fancy only.”

“Then it was a very pretty fancy too, for there it is,” I replied, as at that moment I detected the eye of the listener who had alarmed us, sparkling through the leaves and branches; and the next instant I had gently dragged forth one of the prettiest little girls I had ever seen—tall and graceful in figure, with long flowing golden locks; a fair complexion, tinted with red, but just then mounting with crimson blushes; fine blue eyes, and dimpled cheeks—indeed, a little fairy—yes, a fairy, although she was attired in deep mourning.

“Oh! don’t; you hurt my arm!” she exclaimed, half pettishly, half smiling, as she struggled to escape from my grasp.

“We won’t let you go; we don’t often catch real live fairies,” said Martin. “Besides, you have half killed us with fright.”

“For shame,” she replied, “for two great boys to be frightened by a little girl like me.”

“You know a mouse may frighten an elephant,

if the elephant hears a strange noise and doesn't know that it is caused by a mouse."

"Well then," she replied, "I *am* sorry I have frightened you both; but I am sure I could not help it; it was that nasty cough."

"But how came you to be hiding in the shrubs? Was it to listen to what we were talking about? for certainly you must have heard all we said."

"Yes, oh! yes; that is, all *you* said," here she whispered, "*about her*. It was very wicked, but I won't tell; not I—that I won't. But," she added, "I couldn't help hearing, as I was in the shrubbery."

"But what brought you there?" I asked.

"To get a peep at my two new cousins, of course. I have heard so much about you from poor dear papa, and have so long expected you to come, that when *she* wouldn't let me stay in the room, when you came this morning, I cried my eyes out—at least, almost—and then—"

"And then what?" asked Martin.

"Why, came here by myself, determined to have a peep at you both, and uncle too, if I could. But hush!" she exclaimed, placing a finger upon her lips, "I must go; I heard MY LADY calling for me. She must not know that I have been here; pray don't tell her, or I shall be punished for disobedience;" and in an instant she had flitted out of sight.

“ So that is our cousin,” said Martin, when we had returned to our room. “ What a pretty girl !”

“ Yes,” said I ; “ and so amiable, that she makes up for our queer-tempered looking new aunt.”

“ After all, Claud, I begin to think you are right about ‘ MY LADY,’ as they call her. What a shame to punish a nice girl like that for anything !” replied Martin.

And now I have told all that is worth telling of our first day in the upper town of Batavia.

## CHAPTER II.

### A GREAT CALAMITY.

To my father, in his then feeble state of health, the news of his brother's death proved so great a shock, that he was unable to leave his room for a whole week. During that time, however, our aunt behaved most affectionately not only to the invalid and his boys, but, I may add, to our pretty cousin Marie, her step-daughter, with whom we were now permitted to associate on the most cousinly terms ; and, although this did not metamorphose my dislike into love for her, it had a great effect upon my poor father,—so great, indeed, that, with a delicacy of feeling quite in accordance with his nature, he awaited a full week after his recovery before he would broach the subject of his late brother's will. Doubtlessly he each day expected that she herself would open up the matter, but in this he was disappointed ; therefore he, one afternoon, but in a spasmodic manner, as if to get the words from

his lips as speedily as possible, begged permission to see a copy of the will ; but, vexatiously enough, as she was about to reply, the servant announced, " Mynheer Ebberfeld."

My father looked annoyed ; I started in my chair, for eyes never rested upon a more ill-favoured man. " My lady," however, seemed pleased at his coming, for, after introducing him as the principal notary of Batavia, and a councillor, she said :

" My dear brother, Mynheer Ebberfeld's coming at this moment is most fortunate ; for, as he drew up my late dear husband's will, he is the most fitting person to explain its provisions."

" Your pardon, madam ; your pardon, sir," replied the notary with a low bow, and a simper upon his sinister countenance, " but *this* hour, and *this* presence, is scarcely fitting, nay, most inopportune, for business matters ; let me therefore crave your patience until to-morrow, and then we will together scan the pages of the precious document itself. In the meantime, let me assure you that you will find its contents by no means unsatisfactory to yourself and sons."

" Nay, mynheer, my brother is naturally anxious to become acquainted with the will, so I pray you let not etiquette deny him that satisfaction," said " my lady," with one of *her* most amiable smiles.

" Not so," interposed my good-natured father ; " since Mynheer Ebberfeld deems the time, place,

and presence improper, I by no means desire him to proceed ; to-morrow will be time sufficient."

"Thanks, mynheer, for your concession ; a European gentleman I felt would be too chivalrous to refuse so reasonable a suggestion," replied Ebberfeld.

Of the young people of the family, I alone had been present during the foregoing conversation ; but, at its close, the urbane notary, with amiable earnestness, begged and obtained permission of the lady to invite, "for that day only," as the play-bills have it, Marie, as well as my brother, to a seat at the dinner table.

"The society of young people," said he to my father, "makes me feel a boy again ; it is a passion with me to see them happy. I delight in contributing my poor share towards their amusement. Thus, my lad," he added, addressing me, "knowing that you have just arrived from Europe, I ordered a serpent-charmer to exhibit his tricks in the grounds after dinner ; that is, if I have madame's permission ;" and the genial smile with which he asked, and "my lady" bowed her acquiescence to this scheme for our benefit, for an instant made me think I had been positively wicked in feeling a repugnance at first sight to two such amiable personages.

The dinner was served in a gorgeously-decorated pavilion in the grounds at the back of the mansion ;

and, in addition to roast and boiled meats after the Dutch fashion, consisted of a variety of Javanese fish, and a large dish of that famous bird's-nest soup, of which the Chinese have a proverb: "That if the spirit of life were departing from the nostrils, and the odour of this nest-soup were to salute them, the spirit would reanimate the clay, knowing there is no luxury in Paradise to compare with it."

Assuredly, Mynheer the notary must have agreed cordially with the proverb, for he devoured it with the gusto of a gourmand, and was unceasing in his efforts to press it upon us.

"My lady," he said, suddenly putting down his spoon, "may I, nay, stretching a point, I *will* presume to compliment you upon your cook and purveyor. This soup is deliciously compounded; the nests must have been of the purest white—in short, perfection. May I ask from whence you procured them?"

"By means of my slave Prabu; his family are nest-hunters, chiefly in the employ of the Chinese merchants of the Campong. Permit me," she added, "the pleasure of sending a basket of them to your house."

"Madam," replied the notary, bending his neck so forward, that he seemed about to stand upon his head in his own soup-dish, "you will merit, aye, and may command too, my eternal gratitude; it will be as supplying my table with a dish from Paradise."



I felt shocked at this speech, for it sounded in my ears like blasphemy, and all about a mere voluptuous relish, by far too glutinously rich for a stomach like mine, which had been accustomed only to plain invigorating food.

This dish, so precious in the far East, is compounded of—first, the nest of the swallow (*Hirundo esculenta*), which, when dissolved, is like a brown jelly or melted glue, the sinews of deer, the feet of pigs, the fins of young sharks, and the brawny part of a pig's head, all mixed together with plover's eggs, mace, cinnamon, and red pepper.

“ Pray let me help you to some of this most delicious of earthly delicacies, this soup of Paradise,” said the epicure, to my father and brother, both of whom had already exhibited their disgust at the precious mixture. My father politely declined. As for Martin, he spoke plainly :

“ Thank you, no ; I don't like the nasty mess ; but I just should like to go upon one expedition with this Prabu and his brother nest-hunters, wouldn't *you*, Claud ? ”

“ All in good time, young gentlemen, you will grow to idolize this rare dish,” said Ebberfield ; adding in his oily tones, “ As for nest-hunting, for which you express such a desire, with your worthy parent's permission, I will undertake to find you an opportunity ; for a love of enterprise is a good sign in the young.”

“ Thanks, it will be rare sport,” replied Martin.

After the dinner, we removed to a large tent erected upon a spacious lawn, to witness the tricks of the snake-charmer. Martin, Marie, and I sat upon the grass, our seniors on couches upon the opposite side of the tent.

There were two performers—the snake-charmer, an old man, who, once seen, could never be forgotten, for not only had he a huge hump upon his back, but a wen upon his neck, so large, that it seemed to be outgrowing his head, which it pushed upon his right shoulder ; the other was his attendant, a boy, rather good-looking than otherwise, for a Javanese peasant.

Marie, having frequently witnessed this man's performance, looked on now with nonchalance, but Martin and I strained our eyes to the utmost, towards a large box which the old man began to open, as soon as the boy commenced playing upon a native fife or flute. At the sound of the instrument, the lid of the box being now removed, the hooded head of a spectacled snake raised its crest about a foot above the side, at first languidly, though gracefully, and as if listening to the music ; but when the boy played a more lively air, the beautiful reptile moved its head and neck fantastically, as if endeavouring to keep time. After some five minutes, the old man, baring one of his arms, knelt by the side of the box, when, I sup-

posed at the time, because the boy happened to discontinue the music, the neck of the reptile became swollen, and in an instant it had fixed its fangs upon the man's arm.

Up jumped Martin, crying "The poor old man will be killed!" and in another second he would have grasped the snake; but simultaneously Marie seized his hands, and, with a strength lent to her by terror alone, dragged him back.

"Foolish cousin!" she exclaimed; "had you approached one step nearer the cobra, you would not have lived out the day."

A *cobra!* How my heart sickened at the name That beautiful snake was, then, the reptile of whose deadly bite I had heard and read so much.

As for Martin, ever fearless of harm to himself when another was in danger, he struggled to escape from Ebberfeld, who had now come to the assistance of our cousin, exclaiming frenzily:

"The poor old man will be killed, I tell you. See, the blood is pouring from his arm! Drive away the snake!"

"Foolish boy," replied mynheer; "remain where you are; that old man is the cobra's master. It is by these tricks he lives. What is play to him would be death to you."

This explanation quieted my brother, and made him laugh; but speedily our attention was turned

in another direction : our brave cousin, overcome by her exertions or terror at my brother's narrow escape, had swooned.

"How vexatious!" cried our aunt. "Go," she added to Prabu the slave, who had just entered the tent with some message, "carry the foolish girl to her maid."

What a feeling arose in my breast at these words. As for Martin, with flashing eyes, he said savagely, "Foolish—she is not foolish; she is as brave and good as an angel. It is you who are wicked."

"Martin!" exclaimed our father sternly, reproachfully; and although in a storm of passion, habitual obedience to a beloved parent at once silenced my brother. Better, perhaps, had he been permitted to give vent to his almost justifiable wrath, for feelings akin to hatred seized upon his heart, never to be removed; but then, in his behalf, I must admit that other matters arose afterwards to fan the flame.

This mishap broke up the party, but most vexatiously to my brother and me, our father, taking us to his own apartments, detained us with him the rest of the day, for fear that Martin, while in his angry mood, should come in contact with "my lady." "For with your aunt, Martin," he said, "I would not now trust you alone. Your hasty temper would probably lead you into some dis-

respectful act, that might be of material injury to your future prospects, for as yet we know not to what extent she may have power over us all. To-morrow I shall not be so ignorant, for then I intend to examine my poor brother's will."

"Bother the will and the money too," replied Martin, hastily, "if they are to prevent a fellow from defending those who have saved his life. Besides, father, I want to know whether cousin Marie has recovered."

"Well, well, my dear boy, you are a noble fellow, but with a temper that may get you into difficulties if not kept in check. As for your cousin, rest contented; she is well by this time. It was only a fainting fit."

"But, father, I want to *know* that, or I sha'n't sleep a wink."

"Tut, tut!" replied my father. "Rest contented till the morning; but now get you to your own room, for it is time all honest people were in bed."

We obeyed, but not to sleep; our minds were too full of *the* event of the day, our anxiety too great about our cousin. For an hour or two, indeed, till darkness (which comes so suddenly in the East) had set in, we sat pondering, when Martin said, "I won't go to bed until I know whether our cousin has recovered, and that's flat."

“ But how are we to find out ? ”

“ I will tell you, Claud. Marie’s room is in the other wing, just above the verandah ; her window is within a yard of the fig-tree, and overlooks the garden. Let us go there. I will ascend the tree.”

“ Well, and what then ? ” I asked.

“ Why, I will throw some pebbles at the panes. If she is well, it will arouse her ; she will show herself, and I shall be satisfied.”

“ I don’t half like the plan,” said I ; “ we may frighten her into another fainting fit.”

“ Well, look here, Claud. All I want to know is, whether you will go with me.”

“ Suppose I say no ? ”

“ Then I will go by myself, that’s all.”

“ Very well, then, we will go together.”

The night was of pitchy darkness ; so far, so good. We could creep by the very walls without being observed, should any inmate still be about. Having reached the fig-tree, Martin began to make its ascent ; but the trunk was so smooth, and the lowest branch so high, that it was beyond his reach. To remedy that difficulty, however, I stood against the tree, while he clambered on to my shoulders, and by that means just managed to grasp the first branch. As soon as I felt myself relieved from his weight, I began to tremble (I am a bit of a coward, or, at least, compared with

Martin, a little nervous), in fear that a false step, or the rustling of the leaves, might arouse some restless sleeper ; and he *did* make a false step, and by so doing, such a noise, that I felt certain we should be discovered ; but he persevered, and when he had reached the branch nearly level with our cousin's window, as had previously been arranged between us, he signaled the same by dropping a few pebbles upon my head. Then, with a beating heart, I listened. Pat, pat, pat, against the panes went three pebbles, but no answer. Others were then thrown, but still no answer. A third time he pebbled the panes, and successfully, for I could distinctly hear the French windows open. " Marie is aroused at last," I muttered ; but no ! if so, Martin would have spoken ; but for a few minutes there was a dead silence ; then (oh, didn't I feel as if I should like to have shrunk down within my own shoes) I heard our aunt's voice calling to a slave to bring lights. How provoking ! my brother, after all, had mistaken our aunt's room for Marie's. What would be the consequences ? surely they would detect him when the lights came ? or if not, believing thieves were about the premises, would arouse the household ; then, not daring to call to him, I despaired. Fortunately, however, not losing *his* presence of mind, the next minute he had slidden quietly down the smooth trunk.

"Bother!" he whispered in my ear. "What a muff I must have been to have made such a mistake! But come, Claud, let us hide among the bushes, and perhaps they will think we were old Boreas."

For a short time we stood stock still among the shrubs and trees; then, believing our aunt had recovered from her alarm, we moved, creeping softly, in an opposite direction to the house, so that, should any person or persons be on the look-out, we might escape them; but by so doing, in those large and intricately laid-out grounds, after an hour's ramble we had literally lost ourselves.

"What shall we do now?" asked my brother, coming to a dead halt.

"Remain where we are till day-break, when there will be light enough to show us the way back to our room," said I.

"All right, old fellow," he replied, coolly; "we have no alternative; in the meantime, let us make ourselves at home;" and he threw himself at full length upon a piece of green sward.

"Stay, Martin," I said; "there is a glimmer yonder; surely it cannot be a glow-worm."

"A glow-worm," he repeated; "nonsense! It is the light from a lantern. Queer! who can be there at this time? let us see."

As we approached the light, we found it pro-



ceeded from a small grotto-like hut, which we perceived to be within a few yards of the window of our room.

“This is lucky, for now we know where we are ; but before we go in, let us see what’s doing at this time of night ; something wrong, I am sure. Stay,” he added, as we reached the walls ; “ can’t you hear voices ? ”

Martin was right ; we could hear voices, very distinctly, too, and in anger ; one was that of the slave Prabu, the other the old snake-charmers.

“ Well, well, old man,” Prabu was saying, in reply to something the other had said, but which we had not heard ; “ you have explained *why* I find you in the grotto, but if my lady *has* condescendingly permitted you to remain here, it was not good that you should keep a light through the night to frighten honest people out of their wits.”

“ Worthy Prabu, I am old, and require luxuries that the young, strong, and handsome, like thyself, find not necessary.”

“ It may be so ; yet, Huccuck, thou art more than suspected of being a rogue ; still, if the light helps thee to keep the venomous reptiles in your box from escaping, it may remain ; but as you value your liberty, get thee hence before day-break, for such are my lady’s orders.”

So saying, to our great relief, the slave quitted



THE OLD SNAKE CHARMER.

1

the hut. Having allowed him sufficient time to get beyond ear-shot, we found our way to our own room, when, notwithstanding our heroic resolutions not to close our eyes till we had seen or heard of Marie, we were speedily in the arms of Somnus.

“Claud! Claud! old fellow, awake; get up, there is such a to-do!” cried Martin, early the next morning, at the same time that he pulled one of my ears.

“Bother, don’t,” I replied, only half-awakened, but wholly vexed at being disturbed.

“That brute of a snake has escaped from its box and the old hunchback.”

“It is no concern of ours. Serves old Huc—what’s his name?—right, for not being more careful.” And I turned round to sleep again.

“But it *is* a concern of ours, and may serve *us* wrong, or any one else in whose room or way it may happen to come. For shame, Claud! get up! See, I am more than half-dressed.”

Now fully aroused, for he had tugged at both ears, I jumped out of bed; and, hastily putting on my clothes, ran into the grounds with my brother. There was indeed “a to-do,” as Martin had called it.

The hunchback, moaning and wailing for the loss of his dear friend and companion, the partner in his means of obtaining a livelihood, and around or near to him the servants and slaves of the

household, males and females, armed with garden implements, sticks—anything, indeed, upon which they could place their hands. Terror-stricken, and every now and then looking behind, as if they expected to find the reptile at their very heels, they were listening to the tale of the serpent's escape, or offering advice as to the means of its recapture. Prabu came up a minute after us, and seeing that, while all were talking, not one seemed inclined to act, he cried to the men :

“Dogs and sons of dogs, stand not here like frightened curs! distribute yourselves about the grounds; search every corner; examine every hole and bush.” But still none moved until “my lady,” coming forward and stamping her foot upon the earth, cried angrily, “Get ye gone; do as you are bid. The man who kills the reptile shall have the weight of its head in gold.”

At this the poltroons scampered off, all but Prabu and the hunchback, who, addressing the lady in piteous whining tones, cried, “Not *kill*, dear lady; not *kill*. You would not deprive a wretched old man of his daily rice.”

“Get you gone, wretch! join in the search; and, mark me, heartily shall you be punished if, through your carelessness, harm happens to any one in this house.”

“Come, Martin,” said I, “let us look for a stick or a fork, and help to find the reptile.”

“Not so, boys; it is needless that you should incur danger. Get you back into the house.”

“True, aunt,” said Martin; “but let us to our father’s room.”

“No, no!” exclaimed “my lady,” with a start of alarm; but recalling her words quickly, she continued: “Yes, to your father’s room, if you will; but better to your own, for he is ill, and it will be cruel to disturb him.”

“My lady, I will search all the rooms which open into the grounds; the reptile may have crept into one of them,” said Prabu.

Those words frightened me. “Then our father’s first, good Prabu,” I said; “for he sleeps with his door open.”

In another minute, without ceremony, we had passed through the French windows of our father’s sleeping-room. The bed was at the other end, and our parent, covered with a mosquito curtain, appeared to be sleeping undisturbed by the hubbub.

“Thank Heaven, our father is safe!” I exclaimed; but scarcely had the words left my lips, when I stumbled—nay, fell—putting forth one hand to save myself. Imagine my horror to find it upon the cold clammy skin of the reptile. It lifted its crest, and put forth its fang with a hiss; but, luckily, Prabu was at my heels: for, as the hiss issued from its jaws, his glittering creese at one blow divided its head from its body. But an

instant after I envied the reptile its death-wound. A wild, prolonged shriek from Martin proclaimed the saddest incident of my life. *Our parent was dead.*

"The poor Sahib! my poor young master!" cried Prabu, looking upon the bed. "It is the cobra's bite."

"No, not dead! say not dead, good Prabu! Send for a doctor; my father may have swooned; he cannot be dead!" I cried, giving way to the wildest grief.

But my brother's conduct surprised me. He, so passionate, so impulsive, after his first outburst of agony, said not a word. For a few minutes he stared wildly in our parent's face, then, throwing himself upon the body and embracing him, he prayed of him to awake; but, seeming to have realized the truth, he exclaimed, "My father has been murdered! I will kill that hunchback!" and snatching the creese out of Prabu's hand, he darted off towards the spot where we had left the snake-charmer; but the fellow had fled, mysteriously fled. Almost bereft of his senses by grief, Martin rushed into the presence of our aunt.

"Wicked woman!" he exclaimed, "it is *you* who have killed my father."

"Hush! hush! my dear boy," she replied, kindly, affectionately, taking his hand and drawing him towards her; "you must not say such

words ; but I wonder not, for this great calamity has well-nigh deprived me of my senses. It is terrible, very terrible ; but, my dear boy, you must not give way to this wild grief, it will kill you. Come, come," and she ran her soft white hand through his chestnut locks. Still, notwithstanding her affectionate manner, apparent grief at my father's death, her expressed indignation at the hunchback, and the large sum she offered for his apprehension (although, except for carelessness, for what crime he was to be apprehended I could not imagine), she did not succeed in winning our love. Nay, even if we had not at the first entertained a kind of instinctive dislike to her, we, who had been brought up under the eye of an English mother, could never have been brought to respect, not to say *love*, "my lady." Her habits, her behaviour to her slaves and servants, were repugnant to our feelings. Of these habits and ways the reader may judge from the following sketch of the class of which she was to the full a representative :—

"The lip-lap ladies, *i.e.* natives of Batavia, are of a listless and lazy temperament, not quitting their beds till about half-past seven or eight o'clock (a late hour in the East). They spend the forenoon in laughing, talking, and playing with their female slaves, who perhaps, a few minutes afterwards, they will have whipped most unmercifully for the merest



trifle. The greater portion of the day, attired in a cool, airy dress, they lounge upon sofas or sit upon the ground, with their legs crossed under them, chewing betel—a habit with which, like most Indian women, they are infatuated. Not content with this, they masticate the Java tobacco, which evil practice encrimsons the saliva, and in time fringes their lips with a black border, and causes their teeth to become black; the great excuse for the use of the betel being that it purifies the mouth, and preserves them from the tooth-ache. To do them justice, these ladies are really not deficient in powers of understanding, and would become very useful members of society, endearing wives, and good mothers, if they were but kept from familiarity with the slaves in their infancy, and educated under the immediate eye of their parents, who should be assiduous to inculcate in their tender minds the principles of true morality and polished manners. But, alas! the parents are far from taking such a burdensome task upon themselves. As soon as the child is born, they abandon it to the care of a female slave, by whom it is reared, till it attains the age of nine or ten years. These nurses, being most frequently but one remove above brutes in intellect, instil into the minds of their charges prejudices and superstitions, which, increasing as they grow to maturity, seem to stamp them rather as

the progeny of half-witted, mischievous slaves, than of civilized beings.

“ In common with most of the women in India, they are excessively jealous of their husbands and of their female slaves; and upon the slightest pretext, they will have these poor bondswomen whipped with rods and beaten with rattans till they sink down before them nearly exhausted. Among other methods of torturing, they make the poor girls sit before them in such a posture that they can pinch them with their toes, with such cruel ingenuity that they faint away from excess of pain. Yet are these lip-lap ladies much sought after by the Dutch colonists for wives; for as soon as one of them becomes a widow, and the body of her husband is interred (which is generally done the day after his decease), she has immediately a number of suitors.

“ Their dress is very light and airy. They have a piece of cotton cloth wrapped round the body, and fastened under the arms next to the skin; over it they wear a jacket and a chintz petticoat, which is all covered by a long gown, or *kabay*, as it is called, which hangs loose; the sleeves come down to the wrists, where they are fastened close, with six or seven little gold or diamond buttons. When they go out in state, or to a company where they expect the presence of a lady of a councillor of India, they put on a very fine muslin *kabay*.

They all go with their heads uncovered. The hair, which is perfectly black, is worn in a wreath, fastened with gold and diamond hair-pins, which they call a *condé*. In the front, and on the sides of the head, it is stroked smooth, and rendered shining by being anointed with cocoa-nut oil.

“They are particularly partial to this head-dress, and the girl who can arrange their hair the most to their liking is the chief favourite among their slaves. On Sundays they sometimes dress in the European style, with stays and other fashionable incumbrances, which, however, they do not like at all, being accustomed to an attire so much looser and more pleasant in this torrid clime.

“When a lady goes out, she has usually four or more female slaves attending her, one of whom bears her betel-box. They are sumptuously adorned with gold and silver, and this ostentatious luxury the Indian ladies carry to a very great excess.

“The title of ‘My Lady’ is given exclusively to the wives of councillors of India. The ladies are very fond of riding through the streets of the town in their carriages in the evening. Formerly, when Batavia was in a more flourishing condition, they were accompanied by musicians; but this is little customary at present—no more than rowing through the canals that intersect the town in little pleasure-boats: and the going upon these parties, which were equally enlivened by music, was called *orangbayan*.”

## CHAPTER III.

### OUR UNCLE'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

I MUST now, as rapidly as possible, sketch the events of two years—events that led to our becoming wanderers in the wilds of Java. Well, about a month after our father's funeral, the notary Ebberfeld read to us the will. By that testament, Uncle Adam had divided his fortune, including money, merchandize, houses—indeed, everything he had possessed—into two portions; the one to go absolutely to his daughter Marie, upon her reaching the age of twenty-one, the second to be divided equally between the widow and his brother. It was also willed that should Marie die unmarried, and the widow be survivor, that her portion should go to the latter. Further ran the document, "Should my brother outlive my wife, then her share shall go to him; or in the event of his demise, to his sons: but if my wife, outliving my brother and his sons Claud and Martin, then the portion of the latter shall pass

absolutely to her." It was further willed, that should our father die before the youngest of us boys reached the age of twenty-one, then the widow was to become our guardian.

"Uncle has been very good to us, Claud," said Martin, the first moment we were alone after hearing the will read; "but I would rather be my own master without the money, than be under her guardianship, and have twice as much."

"Why, Martin, I thought that, like me, you had begun to like our aunt?"

"Well, not to *like* her, but not to *dislike* her so much. However, that is neither here nor there; we shan't be under *her* guardianship, but under that of Ebberfeld's."

"Nonsense, Martin! what can he have to do with us?"

"Everything, for he will marry her, and so be *her* master and *ours*."

"How could you dream of such a thing, Martin?"

"I did not *dream* it, Claud. "Is it probable that *I* should dream of such a man at all? Nevertheless, I *know* it. Prabu told me so."

"Worse and worse," said I, laughing. "Is it likely a slave should be acquainted with his mistress's private affairs?"

"Yes!" replied my brother, triumphantly; "and for a very good reason. 'My lady' has promised

him his liberty papers upon the day of her marriage. Now, will you believe it?"

There was no reason I should not believe it, for our aunt would not be the first widow who had married again; but so unpalatable was the idea of being under Ebberfeld's guardianship, that I *tried* to disbelieve it. It mattered but little, however, what I believed or disbelieved, for married they were, within a month after that conversation; and from the time of that ceremony we dated the two most miserable years of our lives.

Mynheer Ebberfeld, the oily-tongued notary, the patron of young people, proved to be a domestic tyrant of the first water. His word was law, and a Draconic law too, to all but "my lady" and, strange to say, Prabu. Of the first he was very proud; for although her father was a Dutchman, she was descended by the mother's side from the *Susunans*, or ancient sovereigns of Java, and cousin-german to a rich Japanese pangeran, or prince. Himself a half-caste, Mynheer had hitherto, although very rich, been held but in small esteem by the colonists; his marriage, however, rendered him so important in his own estimation, that he became the most arrogant man in the island. But arrogant, exacting, avaricious, tyrannical as he was, Prabu seemed to care but little for him—nay, with such nonchalance did the freed slave treat both master and mistress (for he

was still, after a manner, in their service), that at times I used to think he was in possession of some secret that placed them in his power.

To Marie, my brother, and me, this man was more hateful for his tyranny to his slaves, than for any overt acts to ourselves. But I will relate a tragedy that occurred within the first twelve months of his marriage through his brutality, and you may then judge for yourselves the kind of man we had for guardian.

Ebberfeld possessed an estate some ten miles from the upper town. Upon this was a family of slaves, consisting of a man, his wife, and three children, all natives of Bugis, one of the wildest of the Indian islands. The man, although of a race noted for its ferocity, had ever been hard-toiling, docile, and gentle, and, moreover, passionately attached to his wife and children. It was the latter most amiable passion that caused the poor fellow's ruin, for he became goaded to madness by the wanton cruelty of Ebberfeld to those dear relatives. Unable to witness this brutality any longer, he ran "a muck" among those he so dearly loved, resolved to release them from their sufferings—that is, he slew mother and children with his creese; then throwing the weapon into a neighbouring canal, he ran till he met two Dutch merchants, to whom he surrendered himself, begging that they would kill him.

Now, such is the spirit of revenge, the impatience of restraint, and the repugnance to submit to insults, in the breasts of all the Indian islanders, that these "mucks," or murders, are of frequent occurrence; and if the perpetrator survive, he is invariably punished with a disgraceful death; but in this case, the Governor-General not only pardoned the poor fellow, in consideration of the fearful provocation he had had, but severely reprimanded Ebberfeld for his wanton cruelty, and moreover deprived him of an office of importance to which he had recently been appointed. Deeply resenting the pardoning of a slave that had caused him so great a loss, and perhaps more so the deprivation of his appointment, Mynheer took to courses which led to his ultimate ruin, and that is why I have related this tragedy. But a few words about this peculiar form of revenge, which, although unknown to other people, is yet universal in the Indian islands.

"To run a muck," says Dr. Johnson, "signifies to run madly, and attack all that we meet." "A muck" among the Indian islanders means, generally, an act of desperation, in which the individual or individuals devote their lives, with few or no chances of success, for the gratification of their revenge. Sometimes it is confined to the individual who has offered the injury; at other times it is indiscriminate, and the enthusiast, with



a total aberration of reason, assails the guilty and the innocent. On other occasions, again, the oppressor escapes, and the muck consists in the oppressed party's taking the lives of those dearest to him, and then his own, that, as in the instance of Ebberfeld's slave, they and he may be freed from some insupportable oppression and cruelty.

The most frequent mucks, by far, are those in which the desperado assails indiscriminately friend and foe, and in which, with dishevelled hair and frantic look, he murders or wounds all he meets without distinction, until he be himself killed, falls exhausted by loss of blood, or is secured by the application of certain forked instruments, with which experience has suggested the necessity of opposing those who run a muck, and with which, therefore, the officers of police are always furnished. One of the most singular circumstances attending these acts of criminal desperation is the apparently unpremeditated, and always the sudden and unexpected, manner in which they are undertaken. The desperado discovers his intention neither by his gestures, his speech, nor his features ; and the first warning is the drawing of the creese, the wild shout which accompanies it, and the commencement of the work of death. In 1814, a chief of Celebes surrendered himself to the British and a party of their allies headed by a chief. He was disarmed

and placed under a guard, in a comfortable habitation, and the hostile chief kept him company during the night. His creese was lying on a table at a little distance from him. About twelve o'clock at night, while engaged in conversation, he suddenly started from his seat, ran to his weapon, and having possessed himself of it, attempted to assassinate his companion, who, having superior strength, returned a mortal stab.

The retainers of the prisoner, who were without, hearing what was going on within, attacked those of the friendly chief and the European sentinels with great courage, and would have mastered them, had not the officer of the guard rushed out with his drawn sword, and overpowered those who were engaged with them. When he entered the apartment where the chiefs were, he found the captive chief expiring, leaning on the arm and supported by the knee of his opponent, who, with his drawn dagger over him, waited to give, if necessary, an additional stab.

In the year 1812, the very day on which the fortified palace of the Sultan of Java was stormed, a certain petty chief, a favourite of the dethroned sultan, was one of the first to come over to the conquerors, and was active, in the course of the day, in carrying into effect the successful measures pursued for the pacification of the country. At night he was, with many other Javanese, hospitably

received into the spacious house of the chief of the Chinese, and appeared to be perfectly satisfied with the new order of things. The house was protected by a strong guard of Sepoys. At night, without any warning, but starting from his sleep, he commenced havoc, and before he had lost his own life, killed and wounded a great number of persons, chiefly his countrymen, who were sleeping in the same apartment.

Now, to Mynheer, as to all arrogant, overbearing men, honour and position were as the breath of life to his nostrils. Thus, the loss of his appointment made him morose and taciturn, and for hours together he would sit communing with himself, like one meditating some deep-laid scheme.

Then, strange to relate, Prabu seemed to have been taken into his confidence; for they would occasionally sit together in close conference in the library. Again, the twain would disappear for a week or two at a time—Prabu, as he would tell us, to go “nest-hunting” on his own account for the Chinese merchants of the Campong, and Ebberfeld to accompany him, for the love of the excitement and the benefit of his health.

“Yes,” said my brother, after having heard this, “it is all very well for Prabu to tell us that story; but it is fudge. It is my opinion they are hatching some conspiracy against the Government.”

“Well,” I replied, “that is a very romantic ex-

planation of the mystery, at all events ;” but then I did not, of course, believe anything so improbable, for, although there could be little doubt that our guardian was bad enough for anything, I did not give him credit for brains or pluck enough to take so high a flight in his wickedness ; neither did Martin any longer entertain that belief when one day that grandee, the Javanese pangeran, or prince, came to our house to remain on a few weeks’ visit, and for a very good reason. His mahogany-coloured highness was on terms of amity with the Dutch Government ; for, although the latter had deprived him of *sovereign* power, as an equivalent they paid him a large annual stipend, and permitted him to retain his estates as proprietor.

“There can be little doubt,” I said, “that the Prince would *like* to exterminate the conquerors of his race, and, like his ancestors, establish barbaric rule over the island ; but then it is not possible, and he is not mad enough to attempt impossibilities. It would be to resign the substance for the shadow.”

“True, Claud ; but then, if there be truth in history, vanity, revenge, and ambition have caused many a man to give up his *one* bird in hand for a chance of catching the *two* in the bush.”

“But look you, brother Martin ; it is no business of ours, and I vote we don’t bother ourselves about it.”

"Agreed," replied Martin.

Now we both honestly intended to keep to this agreement, and to trouble our heads with our own affairs alone; but fate would have it otherwise.

A few days after the foregoing conversation, as my brother and I were sitting at our studies in the apartment which had been originally our father's, but which we had occupied since his death, Marie came running into the room with tears in her eyes, and looking the very picture of terror.

"Cousin Claud! cousin Martin!" she cried, "that wicked, wicked man!"

"What is the matter, Marie? why are you so frightened?" asked Martin.

"Enough to make one frightened—that bad man is going to kill us all—you, Claud, and poor me."

"Nonsense, Marie. *Kill* us, indeed! What for?" said I, laughing.

"To get the money my father left us in his will. You know it goes to *her*, if we all die first."

"This is indeed foolish, you silly girl," said Martin. "What can he want with our money? Why, he is as rich as Croesus."

"Oh!" she replied, "that is no matter; he wants more than he has of his own, and that grand but wicked-looking Prince wants it too. But listen, and I will tell you how I found it all out. You must know," she added, in whispered tones, "that

Cæsar" (a favourite dog) "and I were having a game of romps, when suddenly he scampered into Mynheer Ebberfeld's private garden, which, you know, he has forbidden either of us to enter. Well, not dreaming that Mynheer was there, indeed, quite thoughtlessly, I ran after Cæsar, and found myself close to the pavilion before I knew where I was. Then, hearing two voices—those of the Prince and Mynheer—I could not help going near, quite near, to the woodwork—"

"And listening," said Martin. "Had you forgotten the fate of Bluebeard's wives?"

"Oh! I am coming to something quite as bad," she replied. "The Prince, I suppose, must have been asking for money, for I heard Mynheer tell him that he had already either mortgaged or sold nearly all his private property, and he did not think he could supply any more. 'But,' said the Prince, 'old Adam Black must have left a very large fortune; for he was one of the richest men in Java.' 'True,' answered Mynheer; 'but one half is left to the chit' (fancy now his calling *me* a chit!" she interposed, angrily) "'of a girl, his daughter; the other half he divided between my wife and the father of the two boys, his nephews.'"

"Well, well, go on, Marie," said I, now all curiosity.

"Then the Prince said, quite coolly, 'Well, Mynheer, have not you, in right of your wife, as the guardian of these youngsters, any control

over the money?' 'None, Prince,' replied Mynheer. 'True,' he added; 'were the girl in legal possession of her fortune, we might make her marry your highness.'

"The rogue!" exclaimed Martin.

"Yes, cousin, that was a pretty speech, wasn't it?" she said; "but don't interrupt me. Well, to this the Prince made some scornful reply about he, a descendant of the ancient Susunans, marrying a Dutch trader's daughter, the whole of which I did not catch; and the moment after he said, 'But in the event of the death of this girl and the boys, Mynheer, to *whom* would the money go?' 'To my wife; but that, in fact, means your humble servant, for she is as warmly interested in the success of our plans as your highness and myself,' he replied. 'In that case, the difficulty lies in a nut-shell, which may be easily cracked,' replied the Prince. But after that I could hear no more, for they spoke in whispers; but I have no doubt they were hatching some plot to kill us all three."

"Nonsense, Marie," I said; "they are bad men, but would not dare kill us. Why, it would be murder."

"I don't know about not daring!" cried Martin. "It is, at all events, fortunate that we are now on our guard; but, Marie, did you hear no more—nothing that might give us a clue to their mysterious doings?"

"Be careful, Martin," I interposed; "mention no names, you may be overheard." But my caution was too late; for scarcely had Marie uttered the words, "Yes, yes, I know their wicked designs," than Mynheer himself stalked through the opened windows into the room, and, taking her by the arm, said sternly, "Come, girl, come, what falsehoods are you telling? what mischief are you three hatching together?"

"She is telling no falsehood; as for mischief, it is more likely to be you who are hatching it than Marie!" exclaimed Martin, savagely.

"Silence, boy, or I will have you punished," replied Mynheer, fiercely; and without another word he left, taking our cousin with him.

"That man overheard all Marie told us," I said.

"I pray Heaven no, Claud," replied my brother. "If he did, many will be the days ere we shall be permitted to see her again, except, at least, in *his* or *her* presence. I tell you, brother," he added, "if it were not for leaving Marie in Ebberfeld's power, I should vote for at once laying our heads together to run from here."

"I am of the same opinion; but where could we go?" said I.

"Anywhere. To the sea, to the woods, or, if Prabu would take us with him, 'nest-hunting.'"



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ROBBERY AND ABDUCTION OF MARIE.

A FORTNIGHT had elapsed since Mynheer had taken Marie from our room. His Javanese highness had left about a week, and we had been kept from both sight and speech with our cousin, an exclusion that much vexed us. It was night, and my brother and I, while undressing for bed, were speculating as to the possibility of eluding our guardian's vigilance.

"I tell you what, Claud," said Martin, as he stepped into bed, "I *will* see Marie, if I die for it—aye, and talk to her too."

"A brave resolution; but how? We have been making the effort a whole fortnight, and as yet have not even discovered in what part of the house she is confined."

"Let me sleep upon it, and I will tell you in the morning," replied Martin, and not another word could I get from him, so I also endeavoured to "sleep upon it;" but after a couple of hours, finding

that I was still restless, and my eyes would not keep closed, I arose, and, as it was a bright moon-light night, determined to stroll about the grounds. Scarcely, however, had I stepped out, than I fancied I could hear footfalls, and the murmuring of whispering voices. Alarmed, for, whoever they were, they could not be there for any honest purpose, I crept into the shrubbery, where we had first discovered Marie, and from thence, by the light of the moon, saw four half-naked natives, each with a glittering creese by his side, approaching the window ; but guess my astonishment when, in the one who was evidently their leader, I recognised the hunchback snake-charmer, the man whom my brother and I both regarded as the *cause* of our father's death. My first impulse was to rush forward and seize the fellow by the throat, my second to shout to Martin ; but an instant's reflection showed me that either would be an act of madness, and I determined to raise an alarm *only* in the event of their attempting to harm my brother.

Then I began to ponder what could be their object—perhaps to murder or kidnap us boys ; for Marie's story about Ebberfeld, and the advantages he would derive from our death, was vivid in my memory. But no ; they were ordinary vulgar robbers, without the least embellishment of romance, for the repulsive little wen-necked hunch-

back, taking a handful of earth from a bag suspended round his neck, threw it scatteringly into the room. "Good," he said to his companions; "it fell upon their beds; they will sleep till the morning."

It was by that act I knew them to be only common robbers, for in Java those worthies entertain a superstition that if a quantity of earth from a *newly-opened grave* be thrown into the rooms, and, if possible, upon the beds of the inmates of the house they intend to plunder, a death-like sleep will ensue, from which no noise however great can awaken them, at least until they have effected their nefarious purpose; but, curiously enough, not only the robbers, but the robbed, have firm faith in the efficacy of this application of grave earth.

Having thus, as it were, propitiated the god of silence and other supernatural authorities favourable to burglary, I had the satisfaction of seeing them steal stealthily from the doorway. At once I resolved, by awakening my brother, to prove the impotency of the charm, but the cunning hunchback, having either less faith in the spell than his brethren, or questioning its powers upon two lads of European birth, suddenly retraced his steps, bringing with him one of his men. Stationing this fellow upon the stone steps, he said:

"Crouch down here, To-ki, and keep thy cat-

like eyes upon yonder beds. I fear not the potency of the earth, but should some demon, adverse to our purpose, arouse them, thou hast a creese that can send them into the soundest of slumbers."

In reply to this cool command, which made my teeth chatter, the amiable Chinese replied :

"Thy will shall be done, oh ! mighty Huccuck ; the words of the ruler of demons are law to his slave ;" and down he crouched, fixing his mischievous, glaring, oblique eyes, upon my brother's bed. But his back was towards me.

How vexatious was this turn in affairs ! To attempt to pass the man unarmed as I was would be sheer madness, yet without so doing I could neither awaken my brother nor alarm the household ; still, it was consoling that I had learned the hunchback's name,—the knowledge might be of service in the future.

For some time I stood, pondering what course to take, and upon the probable consequences of the burglary, and I must admit that I was unkind enough to care but very little about any loss Ebberfeld might sustain.

But Marie ! the rogues might slay her, or worse—for such had happened before—kidnap, and sell her into slavery in one of the other islands. The fear of so terrible a fate determined me to awaken Martin at all risks. But how ? Well, I remembered that I had a pistol bullet in my pocket. True, if

it alighted upon his face, it might give him an unpleasant blow, but what was that in comparison with Marie's safety? And so the leaden messenger hit its mark, and at the same moment I threw myself upon Mr. To-ki, who, in his wondrous surprise, called upon his god Fo to save him from the demon who had seized and robbed him of his creese. To secure the latter had of course been my main object. Aroused by the bullet, my brother gave a sharp cry, and began to rub his eyes.

"Get up, Martin, get up," I cried, "there are robbers in the house; bring a sheet or a curtain to secure this fellow!"

"All right," he replied, now fully awakened; and in another minute we had twisted, rope-like, a mosquito curtain, and bound the arms and legs, indeed the whole body, of our friend To-ki, as if we had been preparing him for a mummy. Then having secured him to the bedstead, my brother hastily put on his clothes, and we ran into the garden. There was a small axe lying upon a seat; catching this up, Martin said:

"Clutch your creese tight, and we'll make our way into the Prince's apartments, for it is there we shall find Marie."

By this time, notwithstanding the grave earth, the servants were aroused. Seeing one, our cousin's maid, scampering towards us, we asked where her young mistress was confined.



I ASTONISH MR. TO-KI.



"Alas! alas! the hour I was born," she cried; "they have taken her away."

"Taken her away!" exclaimed Martin, seizing the girl by the wrist. "Say, *who* has taken her away?"

"The robber, the hunchback, the snake-charmer."

"This is Ebberfeld's doing!" he cried, wildly; "let us to his room, Claud."

But imagine our surprise upon reaching that worthy's chamber, which immediately adjoined our aunt's, to find him in a position similar to that in which we had just left Mr. To-ki, bound hand and foot, and secured to one of the legs of a massive ebony bedstead. There was this difference only, and that excited a certain suspicion in my mind, the cords were so comparatively loose that a man of his strength might, at least so I thought, have easily released himself.

"My boys, my boys," he whined, "thank God *you* are safe. Uncut these cords; it may yet be time to secure the thieves. But your aunt, your cousin, are they safe?"

"Do you not know that our cousin Marie has been carried away?" said my brother, as he cut the cords.

"Boy," he replied, now with his old savageness of manner, "I know nothing, except that I was suddenly awakened by three men, who placed me in the position from which you have just released



me. But," he added, "lose no time; arouse the slaves and servants, and we may yet be able to prevent the rogues from quitting the town."

We required no second command, and in a few minutes members of the Ebberfeld household were scampering in every direction. But it was fruitless, for although the city police were aroused and made every search, no clue could be obtained of the depredators, nor, alas! of Marie; and to add to the mystery, even the Chinese whom we had so tightly bound, and from whom we might have obtained some information, managed to escape. In a sentence, it was a clever robbery—so clever, that it marked an epoch in the minds of the Dutch colonists of Batavia.

The authorities, however, did not let the matter rest there, for so great was the consternation of the inhabitants of the upper town, at the abduction of so considerable a personage as the heiress of their late respected councillor Van Black, that early the next morning they sent a party of police to explore the neighbouring mountains, as the most likely place for the robbers to have taken refuge. With this party went Mynheer Ebberfeld, clamorously declaring that if it cost him his fortune and life he would rescue his stolen ward. Both Martin and I begged permission to accompany him, but the affectionate man replied that he and his wife had already suffered so great a loss that they would

not risk a still greater ; “ for who knows,” he said, “ whether we may not have to encounter an armed band ? ”

“ Well, and suppose we do ; don’t you think we can fight for Marie ? ” said Martin. But he was only snubbed for his forwardness.

Five anxious days and sleepless nights were we kept in suspense as to the fate of our cousin, and, to do our aunt justice, she at least *seemed* to share our grief. Imagine, therefore, our sensations when, on the morning of the sixth, we heard Ebberfeld’s berlin rattling across the courtyard. In an instant we ran to my lady’s sitting-room, knowing that he would at once go there. Mynheer was standing, sadly, gloomily, with his hand resting upon the back of the sofa, upon which his wife was sitting, and looking as dismal as himself, for he had hastily imparted to her the gist of his news.

“ Our cousin, have you news of her, Mynheer ? ” we asked.

“ Alas ! yes.”

“ Why alas ? Is it bad ? What is it ? ” exclaimed Martin.

“ My dear lads,” he said, in his most oily tone, and with the mock sorrow of a hired mute upon his countenance, “ you will never see poor Marie again ; she is in heaven.”

We stood as if dumb with amazement.

“ The villains,” he continued, “ it is supposed,

finding themselves pursued, and fearing that the incumbrance of their prisoner would insure their capture, slew the poor, dear girl, and threw her body into the nearest stream."

"It is false! I don't believe it!" cried Martin; whereupon I expected Mynheer would have fallen into a passion, and told us no more; but, not noticing the offensive words, he added, "That, although there was some little difficulty at first in recognising the features, as when found life must have been extinct two days"—a long period in such a climate—"from the clothes, a locket, ring, watch, and the purse found upon her, there was not the least doubt as to her identity."

"Strange," observed Martin, thoughtfully, sceptically, "that robbers should not have taken such valuables."

"*Most* wonderful!" replied Mynheer, quickly; "but it is supposed that, in their haste and fear of being captured, they overlooked the trinkets. But it matters not," he added, in a whining tone; "would that they *had* taken them, aye, and all I possess, had they but saved the poor dear child's life. It is sad, most sad!"

"For *us*," said my brother, fiercely, "it is sad—worse than our own deaths; but for you, Mynheer—"

"It is a calamity that has cut me to the heart," interposed our guardian.

"It may be so, or it may not," said my brother, adding defiantly, but deliberately, and with a searching glance into the notary's face, as if to watch the effect the words would produce, "but, Mynheer, you will find a consolation in her fortune. Now you will be able to give the Prince more money."

In an instant I placed myself between them, for I thought Mynheer would then and there have felled him to the ground. He turned deathly pale, his features were contorted into a demoniacal expression, his right hand was clenched and uplifted.

"Forgive him, Mynheer," exclaimed our aunt, probably with the same fear, for she rose from her seat. "The poor boy is bereft of his senses, and he knows not what he is saying."

Mynheer spoke not a word, but was evidently endeavouring to suppress the rage which, by the way, was plainly enough stamped upon his countenance. But Martin, fearless of consequences, replied :

"I am *not* mad. Madam, my aunt, I *don't* want him to forgive me, any more than I will ever forgive him ; and now I have said it, you may kill me, if you please."

"Boy," said Mynheer, when he had sufficiently mastered his rage to permit of his speaking without committing himself, "what mean you ? what words are these ? who put them into your mouth ?"

"The *dead*," replied Martin—"poor Marie ; but I am sorry that she did, or that she *knew* it herself; for, had she not made the discovery, or had you not been aware of her knowledge, it is my belief she would have been here now."

Then, most wonderful for a man whose wont it was to give way to the most violent anger, even upon trivial occasions, Mynheer only smiled, saying, in a kindly, pitying tone :

"Martin, my dear boy, your grief for your cousin has indeed made you mad, and I forgive you in spite of yourself. But get you at once to your room ; there you may give full vent to your natural feelings without offence : to-morrow, perhaps, you will regret what you have said."

Martin was about to reply, but, taking him by the arm, I said, "Brother, brother, no more angry words at such a time as this;" and he permitted me to lead him from the presence of our amiable guardians.

"Martin," I said, when we were in our own room, "it was unwise, it was foolish, to beard the lion when we have to live in his very den."

"It was *not* foolish, Claud ; it was *right*. It was on my mind, and now it is off ; and but for you, I would have told him that he was the cause of our cousin's death. I tell you, brother, I am certain he killed her."

"Well, well, Martin, at all events you have

made an enemy for life—a dangerous one; for now he *knows* that you are cognisant of too much for his safety, or at least comfort.”

“Never mind, old fellow, it does not matter,” he replied, quite coolly; “I don’t think it is likely I shall see him again, for I have made up my mind to quit this house to-night.”

“Martin,” said I, astonished at his words, “this is nonsense. Why, even *I* shall soon believe you ‘a little mad.’”

“I tell you what, Claud. I *should* be mad indeed to stop here to be poisoned, or spirited away without an instant’s warning, and for the sake of a little money too, for that is what it will come to. No, no, brother; I have resolved to go away this very night, and you will accompany me, if you are not so mad as you would make me out.”

“Well, well, Martin, we will talk about it to-night, and make up our minds in the morning,” I replied; and when I said those words, I believed I should be able to dissuade my brother from what then appeared to me to be, at the least, a very wild project; but so eloquently and earnestly did he place before me the danger to be apprehended if we remained any longer under the same roof with Ebberfeld, that I not only permitted him to persuade me to join him in his flight, but became, if possible, more desirous than himself. But where

were we to fly to? Martin suggested that we should go at once to the lower town, and, making a confidant of a certain merchant named Vandervelden, who had once been a clerk to our uncle, beg of him to send us to sea in one of his ships; and, as I could suggest no better scheme, we arranged to start the following morning about an hour before daybreak, before the household would be stirring, and when we knew that the road between the upper and lower towns would be clear. And now I have fully explained to you the events of those two years which led to our adventures in the wilds of the island.

## CHAPTER V.

### WE RUN AWAY AND TAKE SERVICE WITH "NEST HUNTERS."

BEING of a more nervous temperament than my brother, I could not, like him, sleep at will, and that too upon the very eve of so important an enterprise. No! I lay awake, pondering upon the dark future, and weighing in my mind the probable consequences of a failure; then, again, there was Martin snoring loudly enough to prevent a whole house-full of people from sleeping. At length, however, Somnus must have taken me in his arms, for I dreamt that we had started upon our journey, but that, soon after we had left the house, Ebberfeld came suddenly behind us, and, taking hold of my ears, began to drag me back again; and the pain awaking me, I heard the voice of Martin.

"Claud—Claud!" he whispered in one ear, while he tugged at the other, "it is near daybreak get up."

"I don't know; I should think not; it is very dark," said I, really neither asleep nor awake;



but another good tug, and "Come, get up, old fellow, or we shan't be off before Ebberfeld is stirring."

That name had a talismanic effect ; it reminded me of the necessity of immediate action, so I jumped out of bed, dressed, and in a few minutes, with our boots in our hands, for fear of disturbing the inmates, we were softly stepping through the house ; but, reaching the courtyard, we found the gates locked.

"This is a serious difficulty," said I.

"Not at all," replied Martin ; "let us clamber over the wall."

Fortunately, there were some tall trees within a few yards ; one of these we ascended to the requisite height, and by a slight jump attained the top ; then, dropping down upon the other side, we found ourselves in the open streets, alone—yes ! alone in the world, prepared to encounter its sternest difficulties ; and that, too, but with a small stock in trade to commence with—namely, ten dollars ("It is a shame we haven't more with us, seeing that we have a fortune of our own, if we could only get at it," said Claud), the clothes we stood upright in, a pair of rifled pistols, which had been presented to us by "my lady" some time before, and—though last, not least in utility—the Malay creese I had taken from the Chinese thief. Our prospects did not seem very bright, to be sure, but then it

must be remembered, whether rightly or not, we felt convinced that we were flying for our lives: that feeling, and the full belief that two youths, numbering between them thirty-three years, strong, healthy, and determined, could not very well starve, whether in cities or forests, gave us such confidence that we set forth in excellent spirits.

For the first mile of our descent, we met not a living soul; indeed, had there been any person on the road, it was so dark that we could not have seen him. As day began to break, we met a native porter, who was making his way from the lower to the upper town, beneath a load that would have crushed an ordinary English horse. These fellows, by the way, are a marvel to all new-comers in the island, for it is not unusual to see them, thus heavily laden, travel thirty miles a day for several days successively: true, their pace is not more than three miles an hour, at the quickest; but then, if slow, they are sure. Well, from this man we heard good news—namely, that that day was a kind of festival or holiday among the natives of the lower town; good, because, from the great number of people that would be in the streets, we should the better escape the attention of any kind friend who might (and of course we believed that anybody would know, as well as ourselves, that we were runaways) feel it his duty to send Mynheer information as to our whereabouts.

The next incident we met with was curious enough. We had several times fancied we heard footsteps, as if of some person running behind us ; just after, however, we had passed the porter, the sky grew whiter, and, turning round, we saw a native running after us.

“ Mynheer has discovered our absence ; that is one of his slaves,” said I. “ Let us run for it ; ” and away we ran down the hill, till, fairly out of breath, we stopped to rest.

“ Slave or no slave, I shan’t run any more, for, after all, we are two to one,” said Martin.

A minute afterwards the person passed us, and slackened his pace as he came near an old man, who seemed to be toiling his way up the hill, almost overcome by some load which he carried in a basket. Then, when the two met, without stopping an instant, the younger caught the basket out of the old fellow’s hands, and ran off with it. Seeing the latter sink down upon the roadside, Martin cried out, “ Let us after that thief—he has taken advantage of the old man’s weakness and fatigue to overcome him ; ” and we began to pursue the robber ; but as we passed the victim, as we supposed, he cried,—

“ Stay, Sahib, that man is no thief ; he is pursuing a holy duty. If you stop him, the gods will shower their vengeance upon him and all of us.”

“ This is queer,” said Martin, in surprise, and he

asked the old man for an explanation. All, however, that we could make out was that the basket contained the skull of a buffalo, which, for some reason known only to themselves, the native priests had ordered to be conducted from one part of the island to another, insisting that it should never be permitted to rest, neither by night nor by day: thus, it had been kept in constant progressive motion, one person taking it from another, until it had been carried several hundred miles, each carrier being given to understand, that he who should let it rest but for an instant, would call down upon his head the most dreadful vengeance of the gods.

Quitting the old gentleman, we proceeded on our way, heartily laughing at the superstitious feelings that had induced so many persons to give themselves so much trouble about nothing. The old man's story of the skull, however, reminded me of another I had heard, illustrative of the credulity of the poor natives of Java.

Some years before, it was unexpectedly discovered, that in a remote but populous part of the island of Java, a road was constructed, leading to the top of the mountain Sumbeng, one of the highest in the island. An inquiry being set on foot, it was discovered that the delusion which gave rise to the work had its origin in the province of Banyumas, in the territories of the Susunan; that the infection spread to the territory of the

Sultan, from whence it extended to that of the European Power. On examination, a road was found constructed, seventy feet broad, and from fifty to sixty miles in extent, wonderfully smooth and well made. One point which appears to have been considered necessary was, that the road should not cross rivers, the consequence of which was that it winded in a thousand ways, that the principle might not be infringed. Another point as peremptorily insisted upon was, that the straight course of the road should not be interrupted by any regard to private rights; and, in consequence, trees and houses were overturned to make way for it.

The population of whole districts, occasionally to the amount of five and six thousand labourers, were employed on the road; and among a people disinclined to active exertion, the laborious work was nearly completed in two months—such was the effect of the temporary enthusiasm with which they were inspired. It appeared in the sequel, that a bare report had set the whole work in motion. An old woman had dreamt, or pretended to have dreamt, that a divine personage was about to descend from heaven on the mountain Sumbeng. Piety suggested the propriety of constructing a road to facilitate his descent; and divine vengeance, it was rumoured, would pursue the sacrilegious person who refused to join in the meritorious labour.

These reports quickly wrought on the fears and ignorance of the people, and they heartily joined in the enterprise. The old woman distributed slips of palm-leaves to the labourers, with magic letters written upon them, as charms against wounds and sickness. When this strange affair was discovered by the native authorities, orders were given to desist from the work, and the inhabitants returned, without murmur, to their wonted occupations.

In no spot on the globe, perhaps, is there to be met such a various collection of the human race as in that lower town of Batavia, at which we arrived shortly after our adventure with the old gentleman of the buffalo skull :—Hindoos, who, with the setting in of the westerly monsoons, come in shoals to seek their fortunes in a country richer by nature than the peninsula ; shrewd, supple, unwarlike, mendacious, and avaricious Chinese—keen-witted, laborious, luxurious, yet sensual and pusillanimous, but whose intelligence and activity have placed in their hands the management of the public revenue in almost every country of the Archipelago—the end and object of their lives, after the accumulation of wealth, being to return to the Celestial Empire, to lay their bones in the tombs of their ancestors ; natives of the other islands, Malays, Dutch, Spaniards, half-castes, and lastly Arabs—ambitious, intriguing, and bigoted, but who possess a strength of character which places them far above the

simple natives of the Indian islands, to whom, in matters of religion, they dictate with that arrogance with which the meanest of the countrymen of Mahomed consider they are entitled to conduct themselves ; but withal, Arabs, when not devoted to spiritual concerns, and occupied in mercantile affairs, have the reputation of being fair and adventurous merchants.

Now, upon ordinary days, during business hours, there is ever much bustle and traffic in the lower town. Upon that day, however, the streets were crowded as you only see streets crowded in Asiatic cities, but then it was with merry-makers, idlers, pleasure-seekers ; for, as I have said, it was a holiday among the Asiatics—business seemed suspended : Europeans, except those who had come as spectators, were scarce. So far this suited our purpose, for we should have less chance of meeting any friends of Ebberfeld ; but, upon the other hand, it was a great chance if we should find our friend, the merchant, in town, and if not, we should have to seek a lodging in some native hut. Still, we resolved to go to his warehouse, which was situated on the bank of the canal, which runs between the town and the sea.

Making our way through the crowds of people, we could not but be amused. The men and women seemed to be divided into groups—some, chiefly old men, flying kites shaped like wild

animals, the game being to pit them against each other, the conqueror being he who could bring down his adversary's kite; some gazing at itinerant jugglers, snake-charmers, dancing-girls, or actors; another deeply interested in a cock-fight—a less cruel game with the Javanese than that which used to disgrace England in our grandsires' days, for the birds have but their natural spurs; another group would be gazing at a fight between two quails; another deeply interested in a combat between two crickets, the little animals being excited to battle by the titillation of a blade of grass applied to their noses; then others, and those groups were numerous, sitting down gambling with dice.

So extravagant is the passion for gaming among the Javanese, that it pervades all orders, from the prince to the peasant. The common labourers no sooner receive their hard-earned money, than they form a ring in the public street or highway, sit down deliberately, and squander it all away. On a market-day, in every part of the country where open gaming is not absolutely prohibited, men and women, old and young, form themselves into groups in the streets of the market for the purposes of play, and the attention of the stranger is soon attracted to these crowds by the tumultuary and anxious vociferation of the players.

But there can be no more striking illustration



than the artifice resorted to by the proprietors of treasure, or other valuable property, to protect it at night from the depredation of thieves, when it is transported from one part of the country to another. The only antidote to the supine carelessness and somnolency of the Javanese is play, and the proprietor of the property, therefore, furnishes the party with a sum to gamble for, which insures a degree of vigilance which no inducement of fear, duty, or reward could command.

Among the Malays and people of Celebes, the influence of play is still more violent. After losing their money, they stake their jewels, their side-arms, their slaves, and, it is often alleged, even their wives and children, or, in the last extremity, their own personal freedom. With these tribes, the disputes which arise at the gaming-table are often terminated by the dagger, or generate incurable feuds between families.

We had found our way through the crowd, and had reached the comparatively deserted bank of the canal, when our attention was called to a noisy group of some fourteen or fifteen persons squatting in a ring. Approaching nearer, we could see these by-sitters were watching two men, who sat in the middle throwing dice. One of the gamblers—and who, from the satisfactory smile upon his countenance, seemed to be the winner—was a Chinese; the other a powerful-chested, strong-limbed man,

whose deep-brown skin, round face, square chin, and long, lank, harsh, dark hair, bespoke him a native of Bali. I watched him narrowly for some few minutes, and from his vociferation at every reverse fall of the dice, and his exclamations in bad Dutch and Javanese, I judged him to be a sailor, belonging to one of the merchant ships in the harbour. Well, from what I could gather from the other spectators, the sailor had been winning before we had come up, notwithstanding the smiling face of the Chinese; but be that as it may, it was certain that he was losing now, for as the dice fell, no matter by whom thrown, the Celestial swept away the money staked. But the sympathies of the lookers-on seemed to be with him, for at every loss they goaded him to try his fortune again, till at length he had no money left, and, with a wild yell, he leaped to his feet.

“Thy creese, Katu! stake thy creese—it will turn thy luck,” cried a Javanese; and for a moment the sailor stood as if in a state of indecision, for the weapon is sacred in the eye of an Indian islander. Then, however, kissing its hilt, as if taking an affectionate leave of the weapon, he threw it upon the ground. The Chinese placed a little pile of silver against it, and again the dice were thrown, and again with ill-luck; and now the reckless wretch had lost his all: and so furious

was the expression of his eyes, that I instinctively moved aside, expecting to see him snatch up the weapon and run a "muck" among us. But no: remembering that he had not lost quite all, he said, "Dog of a Chinese! I am a free man; I have still my liberty; and that I will stake against my beautiful creese;" by which he meant that, should he lose the next throw, he would become the slave of the Chinese.

The Celestial coolly bowed his assent to the proposal; but before either could again take up the dice, a man, forcing his way through the by-squatters, and seizing the sailor by the arm, said, sternly,—

"Katu, hast already forgotten the service I did thee, that thou art so ready to play thyself into slavery to this dog of a Chinese? Are the men of Bali so ungrateful that they so easily forget their benefactors?"

At the touch upon his arm, Katu turned fiercely round, but, seeing and hearing who it was, he fell at his feet, exclaiming: "Pardon, oh! my master; an evil demon possessed thy servant, and he forgot that he was about to play away that which, like his life, was his master's."

The new-comer then, throwing to the Chinese the amount in silver for which Katu had staked and lost his creese, took up the weapon, and, giving it to the sailor, said—

“ Now, get thee at once to the prahu, and as you value your life, and, more, my friendship, leave it not till I come on board ; for, lion as thou art at sea and in the caves, among thieves and gamesters thou art but a silly mouse.”

In an instant the sailor proceeded towards the harbour, and his master turned towards us. We had recognised the voice : it was Prabu.

“ Allah is great ! My young masters here, and by themselves !” he exclaimed, with surprise ; but then, as if a sudden thought had occurred to him, he asked, in a whisper : “ Does ‘ my lady ’ and Mynheer know of your being here ?”

“ No, Prabu,” said Martin ; and he was about to tell him a portion of our story, but the latter, interrupting him, said :

“ Then if my young masters do not desire their whereabouts to reach their ears, let them follow, but at a distance, as if they knew me not ;” and, without another word, he proceeded along the bank of the canal, but in an opposite direction to that taken by Katu.

“ *Shall* we follow him, Martin ?” said I, doubtfully.

“ Of course. Why not ? It is a good omen, don’t you see, that chance, the Providence of fools, is about to befriend us. Perhaps he is going nest-hunting, and will take us with him.”

“But can we trust him? Will he not take us back to Mynheer?”

“Yes, we can trust him; and I am sure he *won't* take us back to Mynheer; for although he is, in some way or other, mysteriously mixed up with that bad man, Prabu is an honest fellow, or I am no judge;” and as, when my brother spoke in that offhand manner, and came to a decision with abruptness, I knew it was useless to attempt to argue with him, I followed the ex-slave without further comment, only wondering what it was the “fool's Providence,” as Martin had termed chance, had in store for us.

Having walked about half a mile along the bank, Prabu came to a dead halt in front of a spacious but very low bamboo building, which I at first believed to be some warehouse. When, however, we got up to him, he said :

“My young masters do not desire that Mynheer should know that they have been with Prabu. Thus it was that he thought it well not to be seen with them. Let them now follow him into the house, for there they can unbosom themselves without fear.”

“But,” said I, shrinking backwards, as I caught a view of the interior, “I do not like to enter this vile place; it is an opium-house.”

“It is not the house that is bad, but the people who frequent it, and with them my master need

have no association. Let them enter fearlessly, for it is here only we can converse without fear of seeing any of the Dutch merchants."

"Oh, bother! Don't be so particular, Claud. Come along; Prabu knows best. We are not to be bad, because others are, surely," said Martin.

"Oh! very well," said I, seeing Martin was getting angry, "lead on; but, mind, I shall not smoke the horrid stuff."

"Well, I don't suppose anybody will ask you," replied my brother; and in we went. As, however, I walked up the room, I felt as much contaminated as if I had been in an English gin-shop. But the scene was even worse. Along each side of the room were separate divisions or chambers, with matted floors, upon which sat or reclined Chinese, in one of the phases consequent upon the free use of opium:—one giddily stupid; another in loquacious intoxication; another in something like convulsions; another as if in a state of beatification; but all with emaciated forms, wild, staring eyes, a slight cough, and hectic cheeks: but not one, certainly, who seemed likely, or indeed capable, of listening with profit to anything we might have to say.

Having led us to one of the largest of these chambers, Prabu bade us seat ourselves upon the matting; then, following our example, he called to an attendant, who brought him a small pipe filled

with a mixture of tobacco and opium. To do Prabu justice, however, he was no debauched opium-smoker, but called for the drug on this occasion, that the attendant might readily believe him to be an ordinary visitor, and not a spy upon the actions and words of others—a character, by the way, not uncommon in these dens, where it is believed by the authorities that conspiracies are ever being hatched for the overthrow of European rule.

While, however, he is taking his whiff, I must say a few words about this most deleterious narcotic, which, by the way, has made so much noise, and done so much mischief, in the world. First, let me premise that the Indian islanders invariably *smoke* instead of chew opium, like the inhabitants of continental Asia. The method of preparing it for use is as follows: The raw opium is first boiled or seethed in a copper vessel; then strained through a cloth, to free it from impurities; and then a second time boiled. The leaf of the *tambaku*, shred fine, is mixed with it, in a quantity sufficient to absorb the whole; and it is afterwards made up into pills, about the size of peas, for smoking. One of these being put into the small tube that projects from the side of the opium-pipe, that tube is applied to a lamp, and the pill being lighted, is consumed at one whiff or inflation of the lungs, attended with a whistling noise. The smoke is never emitted by the mouth,

but usually receives vent through the nostrils, and sometimes, by adepts, through the passage of the ears and eyes. This preparation of the opium is called *maadat*, and is often adulterated in the process by mixing *jaggri*, or pine sugar, with it, as is the raw opium by incorporating with it the fruit of the *pisang*, or plantain.

Having held the pipe sufficiently long to prevent suspicion, Prabu laid it aside, saying :

“ My young masters may now, without fear of being overheard, say for what reason they have run away from the house of Mynheer, and ‘ my lady,’ his wife.”

Martin replied by relating the whole of our story, not reserving a single item—no, not even his opinion that Ebberfeld was the real cause of our cousin’s death. To which Prabu, having listened attentively, said :

“ Allah is great ! and if He has put it into the hearts of my young masters to run from their home, like frightened deer from the hunters, it is not for Prabu to send them back to Mynheer ; for, *if the words they utter about him be good*, he must be a bad man, and it would be to send them into danger ; for although we know that the poison of a centipede is in its head, the poison of a scorpion in its tail, the poison of the snake in its tooth, the venom of a bad man is fixed to no one spot, but dispersed over his whole body, and so is more



to be feared than either. But my young masters must eat, and drink, and sleep ; and *how* can they do these without a home ?”

“ We would seek Mynheer Vandervelden, and in the name of our uncle, who was good to him, beg that he will employ us in one of his ships, or even in his counting-house,” said I.

“ To go to sea in one of his ships would be good, to remain in the counting-house bad, for you would still be in danger,” said Prabu.

“ No, *I* do not *now* wish to go to Mynheer Vandervelden at all,” said Martin ; adding—“ I have been told that our uncle was good also to you, Prabu ?”

“ He was more : he was my friend and benefactor, and to him or *his*, Prabu hopes some day to repay the benefits which then, as now, lay heavily upon his head. But Prabu is but a poor hunter—a gatherer of birds'-nests ; and what can he do to benefit the nephew of his benefactor ? Alas ! nothing.”

“ Yes, much !” replied Martin. “ You are a nest-hunter. I heard you speak of a prahu to the man Katu. Take us with you ; teach us to be nest-hunters also ; and so we may get our bread until we are of sufficient age to come forward and claim our own money.”

“ It is a wild scheme, Martin,” said I. Then to the ex-slave I added : “ No, I fear that boys like us

would but encumber your vessel. Therefore, good Prabu, go with us to Mynheer Vandervelden, and beg of him to take us into his service ; for he will listen to you, who are so much older than us, and, like him, had received benefits from our good uncle."

" Claud, I will *not* go to Vandervelden ; I am determined ! Are you so cowardly that you fear to go with Prabu ?"

" My young masters, my sons," said Prabu, dreading that a quarrel was imminent between us, " in Allah's name, dispute not ! Be of one mind, or, like the tiger and the forest, you will both come to grief."

" Bother ! What have the tiger and the forest got to do with us ?" interrupted my brother, now good-humouredly, and, I could see, regretting his hasty words.

" Much," replied Prabu, sententiously ; adding : " A tiger and a forest had united in close friendship, and they afforded each other mutual protection. When men wanted to take wood or leaves from the forest, they were dissuaded by their fear of the tiger ; and when they would take the tiger, he was concealed by the forest. After a long time, the forest was rendered foul by the residence of the tiger, and it began to be estranged from him. The tiger thereupon quitted the forest, and men, having found out that it was no longer

guarded, came in numbers and cut down the wood and robbed the leaves, so that in a short time the forest was destroyed, and became a bare place. The tiger, leaving the forest, was seen, and although he attempted to hide himself in clefts and valleys, men attacked and killed him; and thus, by their disagreement, the forest was exterminated, and the tiger lost his life."

"Prabu is right, brother; we must stick together if we would be successful," said Martin, when our new friend had concluded his fable. "But look you, Claud," he added, in his usual impetuous, warm-hearted manner, "you don't mean to say that you thought I meant what I said, did you?"

"Of course not, Martin—at least, I know you don't now," I replied, shaking his offered hand; "and to show you that we are of one mind, I am ready to go on board the prahu at once, if Prabu is willing to take us."

"Bravo! You are a good-natured old boy, Claud, and I *am* ashamed of myself. But, Prabu," he said to our companion, "*will* you take us nest-gathering?"

"My young masters have been delicately reared; is it possible, then, that they can bear the hardships of a nest-gatherer's life?" he replied, evasively.

"Oh, bother!" replied Martin, laughing; "you

don't take us English boys for a couple of sugar-candy figures, or wax dolls, do you? Come, don't keep us in suspense, but say, like a good fellow, whether you will or will not take us with you."

"My young master is as brave as a lion: it shall be as he desires; Prabu cannot refuse."

"Bravo!" replied my brother, rejoicingly. "I knew I should *some day* go nest-hunting."

"When the sun has disappeared from the heavens, and the earth is shrouded in the darkness of night, my young masters shall go on board the prahu; but they have been many hours without food, and must be hungered: let them follow me."

And so saying, Prabu arose and led us into another room; and having, after the Indian fashion, seated ourselves upon the floor, an attendant brought us a meal which was more remarkable for quantity than, at least in our opinion, savouriness. It consisted of balls of rice, and a dish of a preparation called *blachang*. It was the first time we had partaken of this dish, which, by the way, is the universal sauce of the Indian islands, no food being deemed palatable without it; and that it must have some peculiar merit is certain, for although, in common with other Europeans, we at first were disgusted with it, like them, in turn, we ultimately became as partial to it as the natives. But whether my readers would like it, they may.

judge from the following graphic description given of it by the old sea-captain Dampier :—

“*Balachawn* is a composition of a strong savour, yet a very delightful dish to the natives of this country. To make it, they throw the mixture of shrimps and small fish into a sort of weak pickle, made with salt and water, and put it into a tight earthen vessel or jar. The pickle being thus weak, it keeps not the fish firm and hard, neither is it probably so designed, for the fish are never gutted. Therefore, in a short time, they turn all to a mash in the vessel; and when they have lain thus a good while, so that the fish is reduced to a pap, they then draw off the liquor into fresh jars, and preserve it for use. The mashed fish that remains behind is called *balachawn*, and the liquor poured off is called *nuke-mum*. The poor people eat the *balachawn* with their rice. 'Tis rank-scented, yet the taste is not altogether unpleasant, but rather savoury, after one is a little used to it. The *nuke-mum* is of a pale-brown colour, inclining to grey, and pretty clear. It is also very savoury, and used as a good sauce for fowls, not only by the natives, but also by many Europeans, who esteem it equal with soy.”

But to return to my narrative. When the sun had sunk beneath the horizon, and the mantle of night had spread o'er land and sea, Prabu bade us arise and follow him.

“But,” said I, “in this darkness”—for it was so dark that we could but indistinctly see each other—“we shall fall into the canal.”

“Never fear, old fellow,” said Martin; “I will catch hold of Prabu’s *sarong*, and you fasten on to my jacket;” and in this manner we proceeded towards the quay. Having arrived there, we could see, at the furthest end, the glittering light of a lantern.

“Good!” said Prabu; “Kati is awaiting our coming.”

When we reached the very verge, we could just perceive the dim outlines of a vessel moored alongside, leaving a gap of sea between it and the shore, too wide for us to step on board; but Kati was on the *qui vive*, and the echo of a call in Javanese from our guide had not died away before the light approached the side of the vessel, and two planks were thrown across, by which we reached the deck, and were at once conducted by Prabu to a small cabin, strewn with thick soft mats, upon which he bade us stretch ourselves, saying, “My young masters are now in safety, but they are fatigued; let them rest.”

“But when are we to sail?” asked Martin.

“With the first wind,” he replied, leaving us.

“Prabu’s glum: I hope he is not going to play the tyrant, now he has us cooped up in this nutshell,” said Martin.

“ Well, I hope not,” said I ; “ but sneaking on board in the darkness of night is rather an ominous entrance upon a new career.”

“ Oh, bother ! Now you are at your witch business again, Claud, so I shan't say another word ;” and stretching himself at full length upon the matting, with a bamboo pillow for his head, he very soon went off to sleep—an example I speedily followed.

I have often heard people declare they could not sleep in strange beds or places for the first few nights. Only let them have to fly away from their homes, under the belief that it is to save their lives, have a long day's fatigue and anxiety, and at length find themselves in a place of security, and they will tell a different story. As for my brother and I, as the sailors say, we ran right round the reel, not once waking till the middle of the next day, when the sun was at its hottest—so hot in those latitudes, that you could broil a chad on the decks.

“ Hiloah ! Claud, this don't look like tyranny, at all events : that Prabu *must* be a good fellow, after all,” said Martin, as, opening his eyes, he saw a dish of delicious-looking fruits placed at the other end of the cabin, ready for our first meal. Then we arose, but ere we had dressed, a Hindu boy came to us, bringing cups, boiling water, and tea, which we mixed after the Chinese fashion—namely,

placing a couple of pinches in the cup, and then pouring the boiling water thereon.

Well, we had partaken of our first cup, and were preparing the second ; Martin was pouring the boiling water into the cup, when suddenly it danced out of the saucer, upsetting its contents over his hand.

“ Hang it ! what’s that ? ” he exclaimed, shaking his hand with pain.

I jumped up, frightened ; was as quickly cap-sized ; but the cause at once flitting through my mind, I, laughing, said, “ that it was the lurching of the vessel, and we haven’t got our sea-legs yet.”

“ Why, do you mean to say that we have sailed—that we are out at sea already ? ” and Martin ran out upon deck.

I followed him. Prabu was standing upon the poop, giving orders to his lieutenant, Kati ; but seeing us, he said, pointing to the now somewhat distant shore : “ My young masters need not fear that their enemy will catch them ; they are safe.”

“ But, Prabu,” said my brother, “ this is not fair sailing ; when I asked you last night when we should sail, you said with the first wind.”

“ That was true ; for without one, the prophet himself could not sail a prahu.”

“ Yes, yes, I know that ; but why did you not tell us how soon ? ”



“A wise man keepeth his left hand in ignorance of the actions of his right : besides, what is written *is* written ; and it was written that my young master should go with Prabu this voyage. It was well, therefore, not to let them know the hour of departure, for they are young, and their hearts might have grown faint at the last moment ; as it is, they are refreshed ; they have had a long undisturbed sleep, which has made men of them.”

“Then you thought I was a coward, who would shrink from an adventure after I had taken the first step ?”

“Prabu thinks no evil of the young masters ; he knows they are not cowards, yet the bravest men have faltered at their first beginnings.”

Our new captain then, walking away upon some ship's business, left us to make a survey of the craft which carried the Blacks and their fortunes.

We had expected to find a small dirty Malay prahu, like the generality of those used by the maritime tribes of the Archipelago ; guess, then, our astonishment, to find ourselves on board a large vessel of some thirty-five tons burden, well-formed, with a great poop, flanked on either side by a platform ; a helm at each end, a couple of masts, with sails of bamboo matting : moreover, instead of the dirt and chaos of disorder to be found on board most native vessels, the decks were

almost as clean as those of a British man-of-war. Then there seemed to be a place for everything, and everything in its place. The crew, consisting of twenty men, were for the greater part natives of the islands, probably picked from the fishing tribes. That which, however, struck me as most extraordinary in a native trading vessel was, that the fore-deck was armed with a couple of six-pounders. Seeing the surprise with which my brother and I regarded the latter, Prabu, who had come up to us, said, "To men who know how to use them, these fire-dogs are useful, in seas infested by Chinese pirates."

"Ah!" said Martin, "that is a capital reason, and it is brave; you can defend yourselves, and not have to go sneaking from port to port, every now and then having to creep in and out the inlets of the coast, to avoid the rogues. I tell you what, Prabu, I hope I shall see them used. I should like to have a good fight with those ugly pig-tailed men of Fokien, and the Ladrones. Shouldn't you, Claud?"

"No! Heaven forbid that we should *hope* to do anything of the kind. If we are attacked, and can't help ourselves any other way, then it is another matter. Besides, I agreed to go nest-hunting, not pirate-fighting."

"Why, Claud, any one, who did not know you as I do, would think you a coward."

"Never mind that, Martin. While I *know* what

I am myself, I don't care what ill-natured people may choose to think."

"Well, well!" said Prabu, interposing, as if he feared we were verging upon a quarrel; "let not my young masters use harsh words to each other, for before the prahu returns to Batavia, both may have their desires. But," he added piously, "Allah forbid that we should take the lives of others, except in defence of our own!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### WE SET OUT ON OUR VOYAGE.

OUR voyage along the north coast was very tedious, for the wind slackened towards the evening, and we had no other amusement than watching the doings, as well as we could in the distance, of the fishing tribes and salt manufacturers who inhabit the shore. As, however, it is upon these two arts the Javanese depend in a great degree for their supply of food, and their consequent well-being as a people, it was interesting and instructing to observe how they pursued them.

The fishing-boats proceed to sea with the land-breeze at an early hour of the morning, and return a little after noon, with the sea-breeze. Their mode of taking the fish is by drag-nets, and by traps or snares, consisting of enclosures formed, with much skill and labour, by driving stakes or palisades into the water of several fathoms deep, on banks much frequented by fish, and to which nets are secured. The river-fish are taken, sometimes, by

spear, or by first stupefying them, by throwing into the water a plant called *tuba*, which possesses a strong narcotic property, by which the fish become intoxicated, and float upon the surface of the water, apparently dead, when they are easily taken by the hand.

As for the salt manufacture, it is chiefly carried on in situations on the flat north coast, where the soil is of a clayey nature, and free from dark loam—both requisite qualities towards the success of the process. The salt-water is admitted through a succession of shallow square compartments, in each of which it receives a certain degree of concentration, until, arriving at the last, the water is completely evaporated; and the salt left behind, requiring no further preparation, is fit for immediate use.

Upon the south coast of the island, however, the shelving nature of the shore, and the porous quality of the soil, will not admit of the practice of this cheap method. The natives have recourse, therefore, to the following very singular process. The sand on the beach being raked, and smoothed into the appearance of ridges and furrows, as if intended for cultivation, the manufacturer, having filled a pair of watering-cans from the surge, runs along the furrows, sprinkling the contents in a shower upon the ridges. In a few minutes the powerful effects of the sun's rays have dried the

sand, which is then scraped together with a kind of hoe, and placed in rude funnels, over which is thrown a given quantity of salt-water, by which a strong brine is immediately obtained. The peasants transmit this brine to their hovels, where it is boiled, in small quantities, over an ordinary fire, and a salt is obtained, which is necessarily impure, in consequence of the haste with which the operation is performed: thus the inferior salt costs fourfold as much as the better product of the north coast.

These industrious tribes of the coast also manufacture saltpetre, by boiling the soil obtained from caves frequented by bats and birds, chiefly swallows; the soil itself being the decomposed dung of these animals, which commonly fills the bottom of the caves to a depth of from four to six feet. In this process, however, the labour of the poor fellows is to a great extent wasted, since the supply to be obtained is so precarious and limited, and the cost of the nitre consequently so high, that saltpetre and gunpowder may always be more cheaply imported from Bengal.

As I have said, the voyage along the north coast was tedious in the extreme. As, however, we entered the beautiful Straits of Sunda, when every mile's advance showed to us some one or other of the many islands that embellish that region of perpetual summer, and gave to our view

a mountain range, or volcanic peak, of the island of Java, our hearts became filled with delight.

A stiff breeze wafted us merrily through the straits, and in a few days we had rounded that magnificent promontory, at the extreme west of the province of Bantam, known to mariners as "Java Head;" but a week's run, however, along the south coast, and we had become so short of water, that Prabu run the prahu into the first inlet or bay for a fresh supply. But our captain had other matters of business ashore with the chief of the village, so, leaving his lieutenant Kati to see the casks filled, he landed, inviting my brother and me to accompany him—an invitation we were not unwilling to accept, if only to stretch our legs a little while on land.

The village, which was about half a mile from the sea, was a charming place—a veritable little human paradise. It consisted of some sixty or seventy bamboo cottages, neat and pretty, but the whole completely screened from the scorching sun, and so buried in the foliage of a luxuriant vegetation, that at but a short distance no appearance of a human dwelling could be detected; and in manners the inhabitants seemed no less charming than their village, for no sooner had we passed the belt of trees which led us into the wide verdant space in the front of the cottages, than several came forth from their houses, made obeisances, and begged

that, being strangers, we would honour them by partaking of refreshment, and, if need be, a lodging for the night. Indeed, so many and so pressing were these offers, that not knowing whose to accept, and fearing to offend either by a refusal, we stood in some dread of suffering in our stomachs from an *embarras de richesses*. Prabu, however, rescued us from the difficulty, by picking out one man, with whom he seemed to have had a former acquaintanceship. True, when we did enter the house, we found nothing but rice, fruits, and spiced-water; but then the warm-heartedness with which they were offered, rendered them more welcome than would have been a banquet at another time, at some other hands.

When we had partaken of our host's hospitality—for it would have been a breach of Javanese etiquette to have done so before—Prabu desired to be conducted to the chief of the village.

“The ‘Head-man’ is absent, hunting the buffalo,” was the reply; “but the noble captain will honour his servant by taking up this lodging in this house for the night, and in the morning the chief will return to the village, for it is a festival.”

“My brother is good, and his hospitality to strangers will never be forgotten,” replied Prabu; “but the hands are useless without the head; the captain must not leave his ship;” and so, to the chagrin of the worthy man, we returned to the



prahu. The next morning, however, we again visited the village, and found it all bustle and excitement. It was a festival in honour of the second marriage of one of the leading inhabitants. The people were all out; the bride and bridegroom, with their friends, for the greater part on horseback, were parading the village, decorated in their gayest attire, decked with jewels, and attended by a band of music.

As the procession passed us, one of the bridegroom's friends or relations, recognising in Prabu an old acquaintance, fell out and invited him to the wedding-feast, to which they were then proceeding.

"Won't it be jolly?" said Martin; "we shall get a look at the bride, for I could not see her just now through the curtains of her litter."

"There will not be much to interest us, I should think; however, as it would be uncivil to refuse, we will go," said I.

Arriving at the house about an hour afterwards, we were shown by one of the family into a large chamber, around which were ranged five tables, covered with dishes of curry, rice, and fish, with numerous plates of sugar-cakes. Beyond this apartment was another, very gaudily decorated, in which were sitting, or rather squatting, round bowls of smoking rice, some twenty venerable personages, probably the seniors of the village.

Seeing us approach, they good-humouredly bade us be seated at their board. We complied, not so much for the pleasure of partaking of the mess before us, but with a natural curiosity to get a glimpse of the happy couple. Martin, being the most curious, was the first to espy them.

“See,” he said, “there they are ; what a couple of guys !”—and he bent his head in the direction of a deep recess on one side of the apartment, where the couple were sitting in silent, solemn state, like a pair of stuffed images, it being the etiquette that they should appear unmoved by whatever was passing. As we quitted the house, Prabu told us a comical story he had heard, touching that demure-looking, mummy-like lady, during the feast.

In that part of Java, when a man marries a second time, it is the custom, at one part of the ceremony, for the bridegroom to advance towards the wife with an ignited brand in his hand, which it is the duty of the bride to extinguish by pouring water over it. Now, this ceremony had been performed in the morning ; but the bride—a widow—finding a great difficulty in quenching the flame, became so impatient that she suddenly dashed the contents of the pitcher into her lord’s face.

“And what did *he* do ?” asked Martin, as angrily as if he himself had been the damped husband.

“What *could* he do ?—nothing,” replied Prabu.

“ Couldn’t he, though! I tell you what, if it had been me, I would have sent her packing—” but at the moment his thoughts were turned in a very different direction. “ Hilloa! what is going on ? ”

The sight that called forth this remark was a great number of men, women, and children, seated in a ring upon a grass-plot, watching the grimaces and gesticulations of two men, each of whom, with a bundle of rattan-canes under his arm, was haranguing the audience, at the same time that a band of music was playing.

“ Come, Martin, there is nothing worth looking at here,” said I, turning to walk away.

“ Isn’t there, though! Why, these two fellows are going to play singlestick,” he replied; and as he spoke, two boys—naked, with the exception of a blue cloth around their waists—stepped into the ring. Each of them being presented with a cane, the men who we had heard haranguing the audience, and who now acted as seconds, placed the lads face to face, at a yard’s distance from each other, and ordered them “ to begin.”

They did begin, as gracefully as fencing-masters, first with a salute, which consisted in touching the ground with the rods, and waving them to the spectators. Next they approached nearer and each one, placing his left hand on the other’s right shoulder, raised his elbow till it nearly met that of

his antagonist overhead. In this attitude they frequently continued for several minutes, eyeing one another with the keenest attention, holding their canes extended in the right hand, and watching for a favourable moment to strike.

“ Bother ! ” exclaimed Martin, growing impatient ; “ why don’t they begin ? They look as if one is afraid, and the other dares not. ” But not so thought the spectators. To them it was a moment of great excitement, and as, to give effect to the scene, the music lowered its tones so as only just to be heard, and the two seconds withdrew to a distance of several paces, to leave the ground clear for the combatants, they gazed with the most eager and breathless anxiety.

For a time they continued to grapple each other, at the same time performing a sort of waving or bending motion with their bodies, while their feet described circles on the grass ; one or the other, seeing his opportunity, gave his antagonist a violent blow, either on the left side, or more generally on the calf of his left leg, accompanying the stroke with a loud yell. The instant the blow fell, its dealer sprang quickly backwards, in order to escape retaliation from the other, who was not slow to return the compliment, which he in like manner, if successful, graced with a scream.

“ That’s plucky ! ” Martin would exclaim, as each blow fell, and its receiver accepted it without a

cry or the movement of a muscle. As for the spectators, at every well-dealt blow, or dexterous avoidance of a blow, they raised a savage yell of delight or admiration that made my blood run cold. Now, I do not care for such unnecessary exhibitions, any more than I do for the brutal "noble science of self-defence," as it is called, and so I said, "Come, Martin, I have had enough of this."

"Bother!" again cried my brother, for he used the expression whenever he was vexed; "if they were doing each other any great harm, they would cry out. They are only in play."

He believed, however, that it was something more than *play*, when, going into the ring after the contest, we saw that in every instance where the blows had taken effect, a gash, or rather a livid ridge of some inches in length, had been left in the flesh.

The boys' contest was followed by others between men, but by both youngsters and oldsters the combats were carried on with wonderful good temper, considering their sufferings and their naturally hot blood. But proverbially ferocious as are all the races akin to the Malay, during these *games* they are not permitted to wear dagger or creese, or, indeed, to show "temper." If ever a real quarrel arises out of these jousts, the spectators rush into the circle, seize the squabblers, and expel them in disgrace from the games.

But now I have to relate a most extraordinary incident—one that was within an ace of abruptly terminating the adventurous career of one of us two brothers.

The games had finished, and the warlike players gone to their homes. The band, however, struck up another tune, for the simple-minded villagers had congregated round a conjuror just about to exhibit his tricks, when Martin, impulsive at all times, began to push his way through the throng, saying,—

“Come, Claud, let us get a good sight of this fellow.”

It would have been as well if he had failed in the attempt; for no sooner did his eyes light upon the conjuror, than, with a shriek more like that of some wild animal than a human being, he darted towards him, and, as the people came between them, he cried,—“Let me get at the rogue!”

“The boy is possessed with an evil demon,” cried the conjuror. This was sufficient for the superstitious villagers, who scampered in all directions.

Taking advantage of the break in the crowd, the conjuror ran at the top of his speed through the village, and towards the forest which it skirted. But Martin was at his heels.

“Great Heaven, Prabu,” I cried, “my brother

must be mad!" and without another word we rushed after him.

"Run, for thy brother's life," cried Prabu; "that fellow is entrapping him into the wood, where he may slay him!"

I wanted no such exhortation; but it seemed, indeed, as if a supernatural speed had been lent both to pursuer and pursued, for at every step they distanced us.

"Martin! Martin! for Heaven's sake stop; follow not that man into the wood," I shouted, and likewise shouted Prabu; but it was useless. They reached the forest, and we lost sight of them; still onwards, through bush, underwood, and foliage, till we came to an open space; then again we could see them, but, breathless, we were compelled to rest for an instant. The fugitive had also come to a halt, and leaned against a tree, as if no longer able to continue his flight, at which my brother gave a joyful shout, and then almost leaped forward; but the other, permitting him to approach within a yard, pulled forth from the fold around his waist a cane about six feet in length, and, putting this to his lips, the next instant a small dart or arrow struck my brother in the arm; then, giving a hideous laugh, the hunchback—for it was he—turned and continued his flight with renewed vigour, still followed by my brother.

"The poor boy will be slain!" exclaimed Prabu;

**“Quick, for his life! Stop! in Allah’s name, stop!”** he shouted to Martin; **“that arrow was poisoned!”** But there was no necessity now for shouting; for suddenly, as if his strength had become exhausted, he stood stock-still, and then fell heavily to the ground.

The instant we reached him, Prabu tore off his jacket, and bared his arm. I could see nothing but a small puncture, with a single drop of blood resting in the wound; but Prabu, knowing the fatal consequences of that trifling wound, if remedies were not immediately applied, knelt down, and for several minutes sucked at it like a leech. Having done this, he bade him get up.

“No,” said Martin, “let me alone. I wish to sleep;” and, indeed, his eyes were closed. “I will go no further; I will remain here.”

“If he sleeps within the next hour, he will never wake more,” said Prabu.

This was enough for me. I helped to force him to his legs.

“Martin! dear Martin! walk, run, make an effort! it is for your life!” I cried; and sensible, but hardly so, he did try: and so, getting him between us, and each taking hold of an arm, we ran him back towards the village. Fortunately, we soon fell in with two native men, and Prabu crying to them, “The upas! the upas is in his veins!” they relieved us, and, being in full strength,



ran forward with him. We followed, and Prabu went into the first cottage, and obtaining a cup of strong rice-spirit, poured it down his throat. The effect of this stimulant was very great; it revived him, and made him sensible that his life depended upon violent exercise, and, under Providence, his life was saved; for, after having run him to and fro for about an hour, he had shaken off that lethargy which, had it continued, must inevitably have destroyed him; and then, and not till then, we permitted him to enjoy a natural sleep, from which, after several hours, he awoke refreshed, and as well as ever.

“You have had a narrow escape,” said I, when he awoke.

“Yes, thanks to you, old fellow, and Prabu; but I wouldn’t mind going through it all again—I mean the terrible agony of being compelled to keep awake, walk, and run, when I felt as if I could willingly have given ten years of my life for a good sleep—if I could only have secured that rascal, who killed our father.”

“But it would be useless, Martin; for, you know, it is only a surmise; we have no proof,” said I, fearing that he had some inclination to go hunchback-hunting again.

“Aye, but we have proof that he robbed Ebberfeld’s home—that he stole Marie!”

“Well, well, we shall come across him again

some day, and then we will force him to confess the whole truth," I replied; not that I did not feel as strongly in the matter as my brother, but that I *knew* a word from me would have induced him to go in search of the snake-charmer. Fortunately, at that moment Prabu, who had been to have an audience of the chief, returned, and we all three at once made the best of our way to the prahu.

But a few words with my readers respecting this "upas-tree," the juice of which nearly deprived me of a brother. It is, in a great degree, deserving of its bad reputation, no doubt; nevertheless, it is not by any means so black as it has been painted, notwithstanding all the nonsense that Monsieur Foerst, a French surgeon, invented, and Dr. Darwin promulgated in England, about it: for instance, that a particle of its juice, being inserted into the human body, caused instantaneous death, and that the atmosphere for a vast radius around the tree is fatal to animal life.

In the first place, the word "upas," as applied only to *one* tree, is a misnomer; for in the Javanese and some other languages of the Western Archipelago, the word is not a specific term, but the common name for poison of any description whatever. Then, of the plants of the Indian islands, two at least afford a most subtle poison, either taken into the stomach or circulation—the

*anchar* and the *chetik*. The former, the most common source of the vegetable poison in use, is one of the largest forest-trees of the Archipelago, rising to the height of sixty or eighty feet, straight and large, before it sends out a single branch. It proves hurtful to no plant around it, and creepers and parasitical plants are found in abundance about it. The poison is in the outer bark, from which, when wounded, it flows in the form of a milk-white sap. In this state it is as deleterious as when, according to the practice of the natives, it is mixed with the juices of a quantity of extraneous aromatics and other matters, such as black pepper, ginger, arum, galanga, &c. When applied to the external skin, it produces intolerable pain and itching, with a kind of herpetic eruption. The inner bark resembles coarse cloth, and is frequently worn as such by the poorer peasantry, and occasionally converted into strong rope. Great care must, however, be taken in preparing it; for if any particles of the poisonous juice remain adhering to it when the cloth becomes moist, the wearer experiences intolerable itching.

The *chetik* is a large creeping shrub, with a stem occasionally so big as to approach to the character of a tree. It thrives in black, rich moulds. It is the bark of *the root* of this plant which affords the *upas* or poison, which is an extract of nearly the consistence of syrup, obtained by boiling it with

water. The *chetik* is a more intense poison than the *anchar*, but, as far as we know, it is confined to Java. The *anchar*, on the contrary, appears to exist in almost every country of the Archipelago, being found in the Malay peninsula, in Sumatra, Borneo, Bali, and in Celebes, as well as in Java. The Malays call this last *ipoh*. Both are found only in the deepest recesses of the forest.

To produce the fullest effects, the *upas* poison, of either kind, must be recent and well preserved; exposure to the air soon destroys its potency; its effects depend on the strength of the animal, and the quantity taken. Three times the quantity taken into the circulation are necessary to produce the same effects taken into the stomach. The momentary application of a small quantity to the blood does not prove fatal. It is necessary that the poison be inserted with a dart; thus applied, the poison of the *anchar*, in its recent state, kills a mouse in ten minutes, a cat in fifteen, a dog within an hour, and a buffalo—one of the largest of quadrupeds—in something more than two hours. The effects of the poison of the *chetik* are far more violent and sudden. Fowls, which long resist the poison of the *anchar*, die often in less than a minute from that of the *chetik*. It kills a dog in six or seven minutes.

The train of symptoms induced by the operation of the *anchar* are restlessness, quick breathing,

increased flow of saliva, vomiting, alvine discharge, slight twitches, laborious breathing, violent agony, severe convulsions, and death. The *chetik* acts more directly on the nervous system and brain, and after a few primary symptoms, destroys life by one sudden effort.

Referring to the use of poisoned arrows, Mr. Crawford, a long resident in the island of Java, says: "The most barbarous of the Indian islanders, in their wars with Europeans and each other, discharge arrows poisoned with the juice of the *anchar*. These may, indeed, produce an aggravated wound and much debility; but I doubt whether the wound of a poisoned arrow has ever proved *immediately fatal*." Rumphius describes the Dutch soldiers as suffering severely from the effects of this poison in the wars conducted by them, about the middle of the seventeenth century, at Amboyna and Macassar, until a remedy was discovered in the emetic qualities of the *Radix toxicaria* or *bakung*. The assertion of the discovery of a remedy throws a doubt upon the whole, for it is surely altogether unreasonable to expect that clearing the stomach by an emetic should prove an antidote to a subtle poison taken into the circulation, and acting upon the nervous system! The Dutch soldiers were probably more frightened than hurt. In the perfidy of the practice of using poisoned weapons, and the mys-

terious and secret operation of a poison, there is something to appal the stoutest heart, and abundant materials for terror and superstition.

When our soldiers, both Indian and European, proceeded on an expedition to Bali in 1814, they expressed serious apprehension for the poisoned darts of the Balinese. The same fear was entertained by the same people for the creeses of the Javanese, until we discovered that that people never poisoned their weapons. Such, unhappily for fiction, is the true account of the *upas*-tree, the bark of which is used by the natives of the countries in which it grows as wearing apparel, and beneath the shade of which the husbandman may repose himself with as much security as under that of cocoa-palm or bamboo.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD HEAD-MAN, THE "STRONG ONE," THE  
"HANDSOME ONE," THE "WEAK ONE."

DELICIOUS the climate, enchanting the scenery, of the islands of the Indian Archipelago; crowded as they are, from the water's edge to their very summit, with luxuriant foliage, and offering to the vision a richness of tint unknown in other regions; nevertheless, to two youngsters longing for activity, and the free and natural use of their legs, a voyage along the coast-line of Java, cribbed, cabined, and confined in a comparatively small craft, and manned by natives, who, either from ignorance or obstinacy, insist upon hugging the shore and never losing sight of land, was very monotonous. Thus, when we came in sight of the cliffs Karong-Bolang, in the province of Baglen, and Prabu told us that the nests to be found in the bowels of these stupendous rocks was the end and object of our voyage, we gave three cheers—good, hearty English cheers. As for Martin, he was in an ecstasy of

delight, for he was about to become a "nest hunter;" although, by the way, the full meaning of these words in conjunction neither he nor I then exactly comprehended.

"It is scarcely daybreak; we shall see flocks of swallows," said Prabu, as about that hour the prahu made towards a creek.

"What! the little nest-makers, the purveyors-general to the pigtailed mandarins?" asked Martin.

"My young master, yes!" replied Prabu; "for they are night-birds, and leave not the caves till the sun has disappeared."

Almost as he spoke, the vessel ran into the midst of a tribe of these important little feathered animals. They resembled the common swallow in form and colour, but, like Mother Carey's chickens (the smallest of the petrel tribe), seemed ever restless, ever in motion. Sometimes they appeared to skim the water, as if taking up some substance with the bill from the sea; at others darting, turning, and twisting in the air, *as if* after fleet-winged insects; but curiously enough, although my brother and I watched very keenly, neither of us could detect anything in the air, or upon the surface of the sea, upon which they could feed; so, turning to Prabu, I said, "What *on earth* do they exist upon?"

"Nothing upon *earth*," replied Martin, laughing, "but, like chameleons, upon air."



“Upon insects,” said Prabu, “and little creatures so minute, that, although your eyes cannot detect them, float upon the surface of the sea.”

Then he explained to us that it was by some arrangement of the digestive organs that the bird produces from its bill the glutinous and clear-looking substance of which its nest is constructed; an explanation, to a certain extent, substantiated by the appearance of the nests, which in structure resemble long filaments of very fine vermicelli, coiled one part over the other without much regularity, and glued together by transverse rows of the same material. There was an old notion, that these nests—which, by the way, in form resemble the bowl of a large gravy-spoon, split in half longitudinally—were formed from sea-foam and other marine productions pulled up by the birds; but inasmuch as the edible nest is found not only at the sea-side, but in caves sixty or seventy miles in the interior, Prabu’s hypothesis seemed the most correct; but then to prove that, it should be discovered, by a skilful dissection, that the bird has some peculiar organ destined to perform the process of elaborating such a substance from its food. At present, neither naturalists nor natives make any distinction between the variety of swallow which affords the esculent nest, or any other.

As the prahu entered the creek, walled on one

side by a perpendicular rock of at least 600 feet in height, Prabu made the blood run cold in our veins ; for, pointing to a small dark spot about 200 feet above our heads, he said : “ Yon hole is the entrance to one of the caves, and can only be reached from the top. What do my young masters think of nest-hunting now ? ”

“ I shan’t think any more about it,” said I, with a shudder. “ I wasn’t born a bird, and it’s an occupation only fit for eagles and Mother Carey’s chickens ; or, at least, people ought to be invented with wings and strong claws for the express purpose.”

“ Queer ! ” said Martin, thoughtfully, and scanning the rocks. “ It’s a deuce of a height, or rather a depth, to be let down, with no ledge or abutment to rest upon, and this sea surging, foaming, and boiling in one’s ear ! But then,” he added, his eyes brightening up, “ it’s dangerous ; it wants pluck, and that’s the thing for me. No danger no fun. Besides, others do it, and, if so, why not me ? I tell you what, Claud, we white fellows mustn’t show a feather the same colour as our skin. Besides, we are always boasting about being superior to these darkies ; therefore, we must prove now that we are at least their equals. We have begun, and we must go on.”

“ My young master,” said Prabu, good-naturedly smiling at the allusion to the “ darkies,” “ does he

know that the men who gather the nests have been trained from their childhood to climb rocks like tiger-cats, and that even of these one out of every five loses his life?"

"Bother! all right; don't try to frighten a fellow. As you Mahomedans say, 'What is written is written;' we have begun, and we must go on; what we want in training, you know, we must find in pluck; and if you come to that," he added boastfully, "I shan't fail—no, nor my brother either, for all his pretending to be afraid of this, that, and the other; for in *his* quiet way, he is as plucky as any of us."

"There is no real pluck, Martin," said I, "in attempting that in which we know we must fail."

"Ah! old fellow, but we never *do* know what will be a failure till we try," he replied; and as he would have continued that line of argument the whole day, I dropped the subject.

Shortly after daybreak we anchored in a small natural harbour or bay, about halfway up the creek. "Now comes the tug of war," said Martin; adding, "When do we commence, Prabu?"

"To-morrow, at sunrise," answered Prabu. "To-day I must see the chief who guards the caves; but my young masters can, if they please, come with me, for they will find a welcome for the day and the night in the village."

Then, having given orders to Kati to send six

of the men to join us in the morning, bringing with them all things necessary for the expedition, we followed Prabu up a steep hill.

“Truly this may be a village,” said Martin, when we reached the top, “but it’s inhabited by the dead.”

My brother was right. It was a cemetery—one of those cities of the dead, for the simplicity yet beauty and taste of which, in laying out, the Javanese are not surpassed by any people. The whole summit and portion of the opposite slope of the hill was clad with a verdant sward, and laid out in groves of samboza trees, a plant which even when young, from the fantastic growth of its stem, has a solemn aspect. The little mounds of earth, with their head and foot stones strewn with flowers, at the root of each of these trees, bespoke at once the last resting-place of a beloved one, and the pious care of the living. The flowers were in all their freshness, for the previous day the festival annually held in honour of ancestors had taken place. On this occasion, the men, women, and children, attired in their best, repair to the cemeteries, and pass the day in devotion; each family strews the tombs of its progenitors with the flowers of the *salasi*, or Indian tulse, a plant cultivated in great quantities for this express occasion.

With like simplicity and good taste, and without the extravagant superstitions of most Eastern

nations, do the Javanese (for the greater part Mahomedans) conduct their funerals. But they are sufficiently curious for description. The corpse is carried to the place of interment on a broad plank, which is kept for the public service, and lasts for many generations. It is constantly rubbed with lime, either to preserve it from decay, or to keep it pure. No coffin is made use of, the body being simply wrapped in white cloth. In forming the grave, after digging to a convenient depth, they make a cavity in the side at bottom, of sufficient dimensions to contain the body, which is there deposited on its right side. By this mode the earth literally lies light upon it; and the cavity, after strewing flowers in it, they stop up by two boards, fastened angularly to each other, so that the one is on the top of the corpse, whilst the other defends it on the open side, the edge resting on the bottom of the grave. The outer excavation is then filled up with earth, and little white flags, or streamers, are stuck in order around.

They likewise plant a shrub bearing a white flower, and in some places wild marjoram; the women who attend the funeral make a hideous noise, not much unlike the Irish howl. On the third and seventh day, the relations perform a ceremony at the grave; and at the end of twelve months, that of *Legga batu*, or setting up a few long elliptical stones at the head and foot, which,

being scarce in some parts of the country, bear a considerable price. On this occasion, they kill and feast on a buffalo, and leave the head to decay on the spot, as a token of the honour they have done to the deceased in eating to his memory. The ancient burying-places are called *krammat*, and are supposed to have been those of the holy men by whom their ancestors were converted to the faith; they are held in extraordinary reverence, and the least disturbance or violation of the ground, though all traces of the grave be obliterated, is regarded as an unpardonable sacrilege.

For nearly an hour we lingered about that silent city, hallowed by so many loving hearts. To me there is ever a melancholy satisfaction in such places: they recall to my mind the departed, and fix my thoughts upon the future; but then I stood pondering over one particular mound of earth, for it reminded me of my mother's grave, in that far distant English church. What changes had happened since my father, brother, and I had stood, almost broken-hearted, at its side! We had become aliens in a foreign land; a dearly-loved father dead, perhaps foully slain—who knew? an unknown uncle; a cousin, known long enough to have become endeared to us—all, all passed away! With such ponderings my mind was absorbed; sighing, sobbing, I had no thought but of my own sorrow, when Martin, taking my

arm, but with big tears trickling down his own cheeks, said—

“Don’t, Claud, don’t! Be a man now!”

“Have men no tears, Martin, for the memory of those they have loved?”

“Yes—perhaps so,” he answered, wiping his damp eyes. “Don’t! don’t! don’t! Let us think of the future: we must not dwell upon the past—indeed we mustn’t!”

“You are right, dear brother,” I said, at length recovering myself. “But, Prabu, where is this village?”

“Yonder, my master,” he replied, pointing to a cluster of houses upon another hill in the distance. “But look!” he added; “beware!” and scarcely had we time, I to clutch my pistol, and Martin and Prabu to draw their creeses, when a huge wild boar, which had just come from the wood at the bottom of the hill, came tearing and grunting up the slope, followed by several hunters.

“It is the chief!” cried Prabu, as an old man, spear in hand, and in advance of his party, pursued the animal.

“Let us show him a bold front,” said Martin. And as we prepared to receive him, the hog stood for a minute, as if greatly astonished at meeting with such an unexpected opposition.

“He is taking our measure,” said I, at the same time aiming at the brute.

“Here, move aside,” cried my brother, brandishing his creese; “this is the weapon to tackle master piggy with; he is only grinning at that whipper-snapper popgun of yours.”

“That thrust will save us further trouble, Martin,” said I, as the old chief, who had now come within reach of the hog, sent his spear into its side. But not so; the weapon broke short off at the neck-head, and piggy, giving one loud grunt, turned suddenly round, and rushed into a neighbouring thicket.

“After him!” shouted my brother; but the old gentleman, in very angry tones, called to us to remain where we were.

“Who are these,” he cried, “sons of burnt mothers, that they should step between Dato and his game?”

“Why, you uncivil old person, we were going to help you to the pig!” replied Martin; then, seeing the chief stood looking at the thicket, he added: “It is the dog and the manger over again; the old fellow will neither kill the pig himself, nor let us.”

“Son of a dog!” cried the chief, “my spear is broken, and Dato dares not defile Blaber with the blood of a hog.”

Now this Blaber, about the defilement of which he was so sensitive, was his creese, and Martin, believing it was only an excuse for want of pluck, said, as he offered him his own weapon,—



“Well, I am not so particular; take this, my friend.”

“Allah reward you!” cried the chief, snatching the creese, and, with all the agility of a hunter some half a century younger, he leaped into the thicket. The next minute, there was a grunt, a scream; blood spirted from the bush, and the chief came forth flourishing the red steel in his hand, and, now in a much better temper, went up to Prabu, saying,—

“Dattoo is a dog, and a son of a dog, for he did not before recognise his friend.” Then, by way of testifying his joy at the meeting, he fell upon his neck, and, after the manner of his race, *smelt* him—a mode of salutation in Java equivalent to the touch by the lips of the inhabitants of continental Europe.

“We will trespass upon thy hospitality one night only, good Dattoo, for to-morrow, at daybreak, we go to the caves.”

“My house, my village, and all therein are my brother Prabu’s,” was the reply; and then, turning to Martin, he thanked him for saving his creese from defilement.

The Javanese almost idolize this their favourite weapon, like the knights-errant of old, giving them pet names, and occasionally addressing them as if they were endowed with understanding—yet why, except from custom, is incomprehensible: it is not

for its venerable antiquity, for its use was not introduced until nearly the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is not so useful as the sword, for it is short, and most generally crooked. With justice it has been described as more fit for assassination than war. The creese doubtlessly had its origin in a most unromantic cause, the scarcity and dearness of iron ; for in those countries where the metal is unknown, and without intercourse with foreigners, it must necessarily be far more valuable than gold itself—a fact sufficiently proved by the histories of Mexico and Peru, wherein, although gold and silver were as common as iron in other countries, the more vulgar metal was never seen until the arrival of the Spaniards. Indeed, had these two brave people known its use, it is more than questionable that they would have become, if at all, so easily the prey of their invaders. Such was the origin of that apology for the sword—the creese. Why it is continued in use after the cause has ceased, is easily comprehended by those who are aware of the obstinate adherence of barbarians to ancient habit and custom, particularly in an affair in which national pride and vanity are engaged.

Arriving at the chief's house, the largest and best-built in the village, the old gentleman gave us a formal welcome, and bade us be seated—that is, squat ourselves upon the bamboo flooring, and

the slave would bring us refreshments ; but Prabu, having looked around, as if disappointed at not seeing some other persons present, asked, "How is it that my worthy Dattoo's sons are absent when the Pangeran requires their aid?"

Now this Pangeran, or Prince, was the owner or proprietor of the nest-caves ; and Dattoo and his sons, his born vassals, were keepers and guards of the caves against robbers, and, as such, bound to render Prabu any aid he might require whenever he came upon a nest-gathering expedition. At the question Dattoo appeared at first a little surprised, but he answered,—

"The Strong-one and the Weak-one are in the forest, hunting the buffalo, and will return in time to render aid to the noble Prabu. But let my worthy friend delight his heart and please his eye, for the *Handsome One*\* is here to welcome her betrothed ;" and the frown vanished from our captain's brow, as a girl, pretty for a Javanese, but yellow as saffron, entered the room, when he arose, and, having addressed to her some very pretty words, saluted by—well not kissing, but *smelling* her cheek.

\* The custom of naming children after some personal quality is frequent in Java ; as frequent is it for the parents, after the birth of a first child, to sink their own names, and designate themselves as the father and mother of the "handsome one," the father and mother of the "strong one," &c.

The remainder of the day was spent in preparing for our expedition the next morning. At night we slept together in the same room. As, however, it was the first moment since entering the house we had seen Prabu alone, Martin mischievously said :

“Prabu, you sly dog! you never told us you had a sweetheart.” But our captain was sullen, and replied not. Determined, however, to have his joke, Martin continued : “The Handsome One is a beauty lovely as the houris of Mahomet’s Paradise ; but she is very young—almost a child, Prabu.”

“*She has had her teeth filed,*” replied our captain ; but with that answer my brother was compelled to rest content, for he would say no more. But I must explain.

This ugly custom of blackening the teeth is common with the Asiatics, but it is the natives of the Archipelago alone who also file them. The practice, as far as regards the men, is equivalent among Europeans to throwing aside the boy’s dress and assuming that of the man ; and with the women, to that, perhaps, of our young ladies making their first appearance at public places. But it is always a preparation for marriage.

The operation is confined chiefly to the upper canine teeth, the edges of which are filed down and rendered perfectly even, while the body of the tooth is rendered concave.

The person about to be operated upon is thrown upon his or her back, and an old woman—a professor of the art—grinds the teeth into the desired form with a piece of pumice-stone. An indelible black is easily given, after the loss of the enamel, by the application of an oily carbon, procured by burning the shell of the cocoa-nut. The two middle upper canine teeth are left white, and sometimes covered with a plate of gold—the contrast which they form, in either case, with the jet-black of their neighbours being looked upon as highly becoming. A few individuals, more whimsical than the rest, have the teeth filed into the appearance of a saw.

Thus, not only to be in the fashion, but to be regarded as a real beauty, a Javanese must have his teeth properly filed and blackened; for, say they, “men and women ought not to have teeth like dogs and monkeys.” And this saying, perhaps, suggests that the ugly institution had its origin in a rude effort of improvement, on the part of the first savage tribe that began it, to distinguish itself from the beasts of the field and those ruder than themselves, who nearly resembled the former. Crawford gives us the following anecdote, illustrative of Javanese public opinion upon this “mode:”—

“After the young Sultan of Java had had his teeth duly filed and blackened, according to cus-

tom, one of the chiefs asked me, with perfect earnestness, if I did not think his highness's looks *very much improved*, and was surprised that I did not agree with him. When the elder son of the Chief of Samarang—one of the very interesting youths who were educated at Calcutta—visited Bali, the Rajah of Blelleng, one of the sovereigns of that island, was informed of the circumstance, and asked his opinion of him. He approved of his looks, manners, and conversation; but added, 'it was a thousand pities his teeth were white!'

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WE DESCEND INTO THE NEST-CAVES.

WHEN we awoke the sun was high in the heavens, and our captain had quitted the room.

“Hilloa!” cried my brother. “Get up, Claud! Make hāste, or that fellow Prabu will leave us behind.”

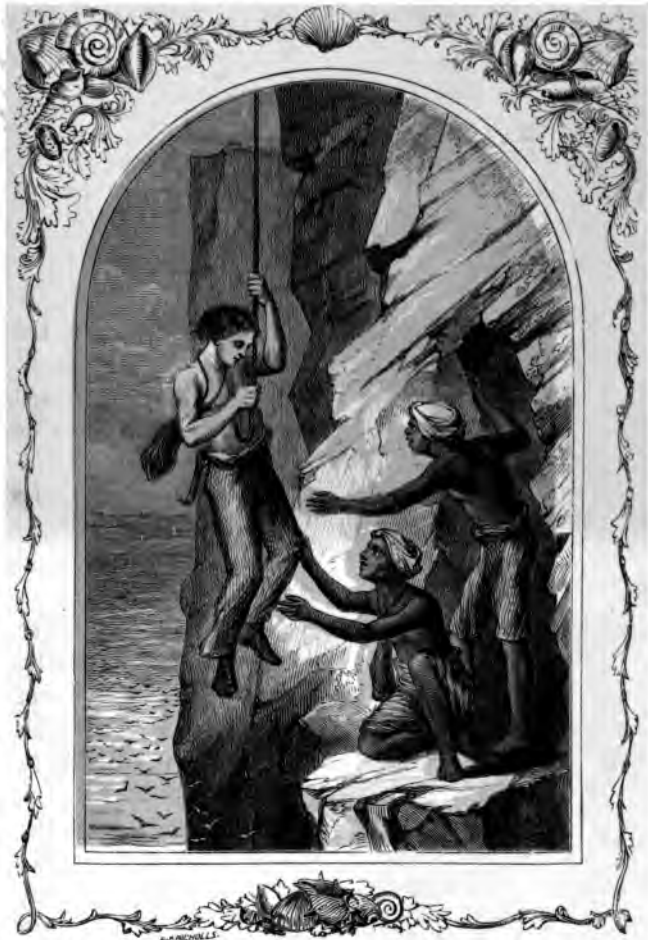
“Not he,” said I, dressing very leisurely; “he has gone to prepare for the gathering.”

“Ah! but he *will* though—just to save us from risking our property in the venture.”

“What do you mean, Martin—what property have we?” I asked, taking his words quite literally.

“Why, our necks, to be sure. You call them property, don’t you?” But at that moment Prabu came to tell us the native gatherers were ready to set out for the caves.

The party consisted of half a dozen of the prahu’s men; the two leaders, Kati and Prabu; and an auxiliary force of six of the villagers, who, from a life-long residence near the caves, were supposed to be acquainted with every nook and



DESCENT TO NEST CAVES.





cranny. The whole party, with the exception of Martin and I (who, by the way, were attired in loose jackets and trousers of Chinese grass silk), were naked to the waist, which was girdled by a kind of sash, that secured their drawers. Then each, ourselves included, had a small bag suspended from the neck for the nests; a sharp bill-hook, with which to cut a pathway through the jungle, a long iron spike, a coil of roughly-made rope, strong enough to support the weight of a man; a torch, made of bark and the resins exuded from forest-trees, and a flint and steel. In addition, several of the villagers carried two or three bamboo-poles of considerable length, and Martin and I had one pistol each, and one creese between us, of which he was the custodian. Thus equipped, we started upon our break-neck expedition.

A long tramp of three or four miles, through thick jungle and tall grass, continually on the look-out for deadly snakes, wading across running streams, now and then falling into holes treacherously hidden by the dank vegetation, and we reached the base of a precipitous cliff; and there we came to a halt, not so much to rest, as for Martin and I to hold an examination of our clothes. "Our clothes" I said!—but we had left the greater portion of them in the bushes and upon the brambles, which had torn them from our bodies,

"Oh, bother!" cried Martin, after a fruitless effort to readjust his upper garment; "we had better strip to it, like the natives;" and in a minute he was bared to the waist, and I had followed his example.

Thus prepared, we followed our guides up the mountainous rock, but we had no small difficulty in making anything like progress; for a stream which flowed from the top rendered the ascent so slippery, that for every two feet in advance we went one backwards. The example, however, of the natives—who, by the help of their pikes, were climbing slowly but surely upwards, and resembled a school of aged monkeys with walking-sticks—urged us on, and at length we reached the summit safe and sound, if I except the state of our wind, which was so short that we were obliged to throw ourselves upon the rock, and rest before proceeding further.

The difficulties and dangers of that ascent, however, dwindled into insignificance when, stretching ourselves at full length upon the ground, and hanging our heads over the precipice, we caught a glimpse of the task before or rather beneath us.

Let the reader imagine a nearly perpendicular rock, from the summit to the boiling sea which lashed its base, some five or six hundred feet, and he will not be surprised that, moving backwards and again getting to my feet, I exclaimed:

“Born monkeys could never make that descent without breaking their necks, Martin. The sight is enough for me.”

“Oh, nonsense!” he replied; “a hundred feet more or less makes no difference, so that the rope is strong.”

“But Prabu,” he said, “where are the caves?” I could not see an opening of any kind.

“Let my masters watch the descent of the villagers, and they will see them,” was the reply.

The auxiliaries from the village were the first to go over the side. Each man drove his spike into the ground, very carefully and deeply; then, having secured one end of his rope to the handle, threw the other over the rock, and commenced the descent. Martin and I, at full length, and with our heads over the precipice, watched in astonishment the cat or rather monkey-like ease and facility with which each let himself down the rope; till when within about a hundred feet from the sea, and looking to us scarcely so large as the animal to whom I have compared him, he bent his knees, and, placing the soles of his feet against the rock, used it as a kind of springing-board, from which he leaped a sufficient distance to obtain a momentum that sent him, on his return, into a fissure or hole in its side, which, by the way, we did not know was there until we suddenly lost sight of the gatherer.

"After all, Claud," commented Martin, "you see it is not so difficult."

"For birds, monkeys, or these fellows, who are trained to it from childhood, perhaps not," said I; but before my brother could reply, Prabu, pulling us back by the legs, said:

"Are my young masters ready to make the descent?"

Now, from the very expression of his countenance, I knew he thought we should refuse, and oh! how I longed to do so; but then, who could have borne to be set down "coward" by those grinning natives behind me?—and so I resolved rather to risk my life. As for my brother, he cried on the instant:

"Ready! Aye, I should think so, Prabu, if *you* will only make the rope taut round the spike."

For an instant he appeared surprised, but then he said: "You are brave lads, but too impatient; I will descend first, so as to receive you at the mouth of the cave, and Kati will stay here, keeping an eye upon the cord and spike until you are landed safely."

"All right," said I, well satisfied with the arrangement, and over the side went our captain; but he was not so expert as his men, for ere he could "light" at an entrance to a cave, he swung about in mid-air, making several failures.

“ Our friend is not so well up in his business as the other fellows,” said Martin.

“ He is a gallant fellow, notwithstanding. But see, he has done it at last ; and it is our turn now, Martin.”

“ All right, Claud ; I will go down first.”

“ No, you won't.”

“ Yes, I will.”

This amiable dispute would have lasted some time, but Kati, having hauled up Prabu's rope, without one word of notice, passed it round my chest, and under my arm, saying :

“ S'pose sahib's hand come sore, so him can't hold tight, he no tumble now, for rope catchee.”

But however kindly intended, and much as I liked caution in a general way, I felt annoyed at being taken by our mahogany-coloured companion for a milksop, who was obliged to make the descent in a kind of cradle, while the others used their hands only, and said, angrily :

“ Remove the rope, Kati ; I will do as the others have done. My hands are strong enough to hold it.”

But the latter, having once received his orders, you might as easily have moved a mountain as have induced him to swerve from them, even in a degree : thus, as he very coolly continued to adjust the rope, so that it should cause me the least possible inconvenience, he replied :

“ Umpossible ; the cap'en say, young sahibs go

like dis, so go they mus, cos dere hands not buffalo horn, like dark man's, but all soft like cat's paw—rope cut 'em in bits."

But more vexatious still was my brother, who seconded Kati's affront :

"Come, Claud, old fellow," said he ; "the strap is on, it is no use kicking. Go on, Kati must obey orders ; besides, it is the safer plan after all."

This speech surprised me, for most assuredly, had *he* been seized in that rude fashion, he would have been obstreperous enough. The truth, however was, that delighted at my risk being lessened, he swallowed his own pride, and resolved to submit himself to the same undignified if not (the natives being bystanders) somewhat humiliating ordeal.

Well, over I went, keeping my eyes upwards, and feeling the cliff with my feet, and so, hand after hand, let myself down ; but about halfway, I struck my head so violently against a projecting piece of rock, that I believe I should have let go the rope, but for a cheer from Martin above, and another from Prabu beneath ; so at length I felt myself suddenly clutched by the legs, and dragged into the cave—of course by Prabu, who had been standing upon a small narrow ledge for the purpose. After a similar manner, but with greater speed, descended Martin, who, as he landed cried :

“Bravo us! You see we have done it, Claud, and it is no great matter after all.”

“Aye, Martin, the coming down is all very well; but the getting up again? How, in Heaven’s name, shall we manage that?”

“Oh,” said he, laughing, “that will come all right. As for me, I shall make my way up the same as the natives; and you, you know, we can haul up between us.”

When Kati, and all those of the prahu’s men who were not stationed above, at the spikes and ropes, to prevent their being tampered with, had descended, Prabu leading the way, we moved towards the interior of the cave. At the entrance the scent had not been agreeable, but as we progressed the stench became almost intolerable—so much so, I could not forbear an exclamation of disgust.

“Oh, bother!” cried Martin—“adventurers mustn’t have too fine noses; we shall get used to it in time.”

“Aye,” said I, “as eels do to skinning—at the last gasp.” But my brother was right, or other causes soon made us forget the nuisance.

As we advanced, the cave appeared to widen; but as, at every step, we had been leaving the light and wind behind us, it was now both prudent and necessary to appeal to flint and steel. Two torches were therefore at once lighted by Prabu and Kati,



when a din assailed our ears that could be compared with nothing mortal. The little swallows in regiments, nay battalions, left their nests, loudly chirping their astonishment, and flapping their wings with indignation; while hundreds, perhaps thousands, of huge bats darted frantically to and fro, and, swooping down in their anger, literally smacked our faces and boxed our ears with their wings. Almost stunned with the hideous sounds—sounds rendered almost supernatural by the echoes of the cave—I placed my fingers in my ears; but removing them again, the noise sounded as demonic as looked that mass of darkness, gilded by the deep red glare of the two torches.

“Our small friends seem taken by surprise,” said Martin, who regarded it all as good fun. “Hilloa! that’s not civil,” he added, as a bat flapped his great wings in his face.

“They will soon make their way out to sea,” said Prabu. But as the last covey of bats, probably aroused by the noise made by the others, came as it were tumbling one over the other in their haste to escape from the cavern, they blundered against the torches, and we were at once in total darkness.

“How stupid of the winged brutes!” exclaimed my brother.

By the time, however, the torches had been again lighted, the noisy little animals seemed to

have made their way to the sea, and then Martin said, regrettingly :

“ What a pity we didn't have a shot at those swallows ! We could have brought down a hundred of them.”

“ It would have been a cruel and wanton destruction of life,” said I.

“ My young master is right,” said Prabu, who took a purely business-like view of the matter. “ You would have destroyed the creatures who make the nests.”

“ Ah ! I see, it would have been like killing the goose who laid the golden eggs,” said Martin ; and Prabu, who had never heard that celebrated legend, taking the words literally, replied :

“ A wonderful bird that, my master. Her nests would bring more dollars than these.”

“ I should think so, indeed,” returned Martin, saucily. “ It is only a pity one don't know where they roost.”

“ But anyhow, ' Prabu, we *might* have killed a few of those bats.”

“ Yes,” was the reply, “ or any of the swallows which build near the entrance of the caves.”

“ But why those ? Are they less valuable, only because they build in the interior ? ”

To this Prabu replied, by explaining that there were two species of swallow in the caves—one that produced the edible-nests, another that built near

the entrance, but which were always at enmity with their more valuable neighbours, whom they were in the habit of disturbing and attacking.

Advancing, torch in hand, Prabu led us to what at first appeared to be the furthest end of the cavern; but suddenly placing himself upon all fours, or rather *all threes*, for in one of his hands he held the torch, he crept through an aperture barely large enough to admit one person. We followed, and then found ourselves in what, from the sound, for we could not see, seemed to be a very large excavation in the rock. Here two other torches were lighted, and being fixed in the earth—which, by the way, seemed entirely formed of guano, or the dung of the swallows—the whole party began to unpack their bamboo poles. These they lashed securely end to end, till they had constructed between them six poles, each of the enormous length of ninety or one hundred feet. I looked on with surprise, for the purpose of these bamboos had not occurred to me till now. By means of these the natives would ascend to the nests, which are invariably placed near the top of the caves.

The poles being completed, Prabu, Kati, and four others, placing them upon their shoulders, followed four men, who waved lighted torches above their heads, as if to see in which spots the nests most abounded. Experience, however, must

have been their greatest friend, for the eye could not pierce the opaque mass between them and the roof. No, it was only when the places had been chosen, the poles fixed, and each man, torch in hand, and by aid of deep notches cut in his pole, had clambered to its utmost height, that we could see the vast size of the cave in which we stood ; and which, by the way, we afterwards discovered was used by the gatherers as a habitation during the nesting-season.

As, before permitting Martin and I to descend to the caves, it had been Prabu's policy to let us first watch the natives, so he insisted that we should study the monkey-like facility with which his men clambered up the poles and remained thereupon, before he would permit us to attempt the same feat.

For some time we complied, but, then, nest-gathering is so tedious a process that we became impatient of waiting, and resolved to try our hands. Thus, we took up some of the spare bamboos, and began to lash them together ; but, comprehending our intention, one of the natives told us that it was useless, for there were no more stations for poles in that cave.

" Then look you, my friend, we will try another cave," replied Martin. " For I take it," he added— as he pointed to a barely distinguishable opening in the rock, at a short distance from where we

were standing—"that hole is the entrance to a cavern of some kind. At any rate, we will explore it."

"S'pose sahibs go dere, dey no come back; no man ebber do 'scape dat cave ob debels." Then, to frighten us the more (at least so we thought), he told us that, during the last nesting-season, three villagers had, against the wishes of their friends, entered the cavern, but that they had never since been heard of.

"Bother! what fudge!" cried Martin, rudely. "At any rate, Claud," he 'added, "we can leave the poles here, while we first have a look at the interior, and so judge for ourselves."

Accordingly, regardless of the many well-meant warnings, we lighted our torches and passed through the fissure; and in that instance I was as wrong-headed or obstinate as my brother, for I led the way. At the time I felt rather surprised that Prabu, even from the top of the pole at which he was perched, did not descend and stop our departure; for had he but glanced downwards, and seen our lighted torches, he must have known we were about entering the cave terrible even to the most daring of the nest-hunters. But afterwards I found that the thoughts both of Prabu and Kati were absorbed in their occupation; for, unexpectedly, they had fallen upon what miners would call a new vein—*i. e.*, a cluster of the finest white or *cock's*

*nests.* But that you may the better comprehend the value of their discovery, I must explain that, as an article of commerce, the quality of the nest is determined by several circumstances; for instance, the nature and situation of the cave, its extent, but, above all, the time at which the nest is taken. The best are those gathered in deep damp caves, and before the birds have laid their eggs; and in a superlative degree are those of the cock-birds, who, having a separate establishment from that of their wives and children, are not so much soiled as those of the lady-birds, with whom reside the little feathered people. Upon the other hand, the coarsest and least valuable nests are those obtained after the birth and short-clothing of the children—these being dark-coloured, and streaked with infantine feathers. I may here notice one singular fact connected with nest-gathering: it is, that although they are collected twice a-year, providing no unusual and violent injury be offered to the cavern, they yield as productively as if left altogether unmolested for two or three years. So you see the birds speedily recover from their fright and indignation at the loss of their homesteads.

But to return to my narrative. Upon entering the opening, we found it so narrow that it was with difficulty we could walk in single file; nay, at every step, one shoulder or the other grazed the sides, causing a most unpleasant sensation—

a kind of dread that the walls would collapse, crushing us between them; and thus contracted did we find them for a distance of at least a quarter of a mile, but then we came to an opening of about double the width on the right-hand side; and, foolish as it may seem, and as it really was, we chose to enter that path only for its greater width. But no—we had another motive; there was a slight wind.

“That breeze indicates a large open space somewhere ahead—probably the cave for which we are in search.”

“We cannot do better, Claud; let us go on,” said my brother. “But stay,” he added; “for fear we may be suddenly parted, I will light my torch.”

“No, no,” said I, “mine will be sufficient; keep yours in reserve. It would be unwise to use two at a time.”

“What a prudent old boy you are, Claud! But go on,” said Martin.

We did go on—and on, until we came to another opening, wider still than the one we were then in, and also upon the right-hand side.

“Shall we go down here?” said I, doubtfully.

“Yes—always to the right; and keeping that in mind, we shall find no difficulty in returning,” said Martin.

Again onwards—but about two hundred yards

further, finding four different openings, three upon one side, and one upon the other, I came to a halt, and expressed my doubts as to the prudence of passing further; but Martin laughed at my indecision :

“ Oh, bother ! ” said he, “ we won’t stop now ; this poking about in the dark is capital fun. ”

“ Well, then, ” I replied, leading the way, “ to the right again. ”

“ By Jingo, here’s a breeze ! ” exclaimed Martin, as, after about five minutes, a cold cutting wind whistled through the passage, nearly extinguishing the torch.

“ Yes ; and now, I believe, the cave cannot be far away. If, however, we do not soon fall in with it, I shall return, and that’s a fact. ”

“ Agreed, ” answered my brother. “ But go on, we must find this cave before the light burns too low ; for my torch is shorter than yours, and will scarcely serve to light us back. ”

Again we advanced, but now we had to make way against a strong head-wind. Then, instead of having to walk upon guano, as in all the other passages, there was beneath us the rock alone, all slimy and slippery. Moreover, water kept continually dripping from above, by which we guessed we were beneath the porous bed of a hill-stream. But now I have not related the greatest difficulties of that passage. Not level, like the other channels



in the rock, it was a rather steep ascent—not so steep as that which we had climbed, but more slippery, in consequence of the ever-dripping water, and that, too, from a height of at least fifty feet. Still keeping onwards, and upwards, holding my torch so that it threw a light some yard or two ahead, I suddenly stopped. There was a chasm before us, the darkness of which was impenetrable.

“ I wonder how deep it is,” said Martin, throwing a large stone into it. But, judging of the great depth by the lapse of time before we could hear the splashing of the stone in some water at the bottom, I began to tremble.

“ I shan’t go any further,” said I.

“ Never say die, old fellow ; that hole may be very deep, but then we have to jump across—not down ; so here goes.” And before I could stay him, he stood upon the other side. True, it was not three feet wide, but then I feared, as in fact it proved, that it was but an indication of others to come. Nevertheless, as my brother had crossed, I followed ; and again, because of being torch-bearer, taking the lead, went forward. But now we seemed to have reached the apex of this embowelled hole, for our pathway was downwards, and the water from above more copious, coming down, in fact, like small rain.

“ Stop, Claud,” cried my brother, suddenly. “ I

think I can hear the rustling of wings, as if of frightened birds."

Listening for a few seconds, I said, "I think so too, Martin; then we can't be far from the cave. Come along." But scarcely had I spoken the words when there came a sudden roar,—a gush of wind,—and we were in total darkness. Moreover, by some mishap, the torch itself slipped from my hand into a pool of water.

"Wait, Claud—don't move; I will light my torch," said Martin.

"No—no; *you* wait one minute—mine is not far off." So saying, I walked stealthily downwards, trying to feel for the torch with my feet. I must have walked, I suppose, about three yards, when suddenly the ground seemed to recede from under me. I fell forward—a violent blow on the head—my ears sang, and like a shuttlecock I seemed to be knocked to and fro, from one battledore to another. Yet all this must have been the sensation of a few seconds.

## CHAPTER IX.

### MY ADVENTURES IN THE NEST CAVES.

How shall I describe my feelings when returning consciousness first made me fully aware that some terrible accident had happened! I opened my eyes wide, stretched them wider still, but all around was dark—black. I could see nothing: then a racking pain in the head made me attempt to raise my hand, but my arm was so stiff, it refused its office. I tried the other,—it was worse. Alarmed, I essayed to get upon my feet, and that effort told me I was sore and bruised from head to feet; and then I could realize a notion of the phrase, “being beaten to a jelly,” except that my limbs were stiff instead of elastic. What could it all mean?—a dream, a nightmare surely! But no—the aching head and limbs sufficiently disproved that. At the highest pitch of my voice, I shouted for my brother, but echo alone mocked my call; and then the whole truth flashed across my mind—the going through the passages in

the rock. I must have fallen into a chasm, and probably had only been saved from an instantaneous death by the soft guano upon which I was lying. My life saved!—but for what? To die a lingering death by starvation; my only hope being, that Martin might find his way back to Prabu and his men, and bring them to my assistance. Yes—I had another hope: by the touch, the scent, I *knew* that I was lying upon guano. If so, I reasoned, the cave must be one frequented by the swallows. It was therefore probable that some of the gatherers might come there; but remembering that the natives entertained a superstitious horror of that cavern,—for I did not doubt that it was the one for which we had been in search, and from which it had been said that no man had ever been known to return,—I sickened with despair.

For a time I lay pondering upon the possibility of some person or persons coming to my help. But then, I murmured, this is childish, foolish, to await here the coming of others, when I should be endeavouring to help myself; and I made another effort to get up. This time I succeeded. Moreover, I was agreeably surprised to find that, although sore, stiff, and bruised, my limbs were really not so bad as they had felt—that is, I could use them. I endeavoured to walk forward, but there was some obstruction. Putting my hand forth, I found that it was nothing more formidable than a great heap

of guano, drifted into that form, probably, by the wind during the monsoon. Aye, there *was* another faint hope: through the opening by which the wind that formed that great heap had got *in*, I might find my way *out*, and to discover it became my object; but suddenly, a murmuring sound fell upon my ears—it reverberated through the cavern. I threw myself upon the ground to listen—it was plainer. Oh, joy! it was the sound of human voices, and in my delight I was about to shout to the new-comers. But—well, I know not why—I did not; and fortunate, most fortunate, for me that I refrained. In a few minutes a pale light illumined the other end of the cavern, by which I could see that it was larger—three or four times as large—and more than double the height of any I had seen hitherto. My attention, however, became at once fixed upon the men. There were four in all, each carrying a torch, by the light of which I could see without being seen; and the sight convinced me of the wisdom of my caution in not having made known to them my presence, for they were not of Prabu's party. Then who could they be? A moment's thought, and I came to the conclusion that they were *nest-robbers*, and in all probability villagers, who had been the first to discover this new and evidently rich cavern, and that, too, by some hitherto unknown path in the rocks. Then another

gleam of light flashed through my mind. In all probability, it had been these men who had disseminated the absurd report, which had made other and legitimate gatherers—*i. e.*, those authorised by the proprietor—shun it; and thus the Pangeran, who was lord of that district, was being plundered of a wealth, the very possession of which he was ignorant.

“But,” asks the reader, “what mattered it to thee whether they were smugglers or honest men, since Providence had sent them to thy rescue?” Aye, but it mattered much; for if the former, they would scarcely have hesitated an instant about putting to death one who had discovered their secret, and thus it behoved me to be upon my guard. Literally, liberty and death were equally balanced, and it depended upon my prudence or cunning which should turn the scale. Accordingly, I again lay down behind the guano, to work out in my mind what course to take, or at least to watch my opportunity, and keep my eyes and ears open.

Severely was my patience tested. For seven hours, as well as I could guess the time, three of those fellows continued their labours, each mounted upon his bamboo-pole; while the other—who, from the tone in which they addressed him, seemed to be a slave or servant—from time to time, as the occasion required, relighted or renewed their torches. My position, however, was fraught with

terrible anxiety. What would be the end of it all? There were men who could save my life if they would, but to whom I dared not make my presence known—men, indeed, who would, in all probability, regard my death as necessary to their own safety. My first hope was, that all four would have ascended the poles, and that then, taking advantage of their employment above, and the darkness beneath, I could creep noiselessly along the soft guano to the aperture by which they had entered; but, alas! as I have told you, one was left below, and he kept flitting to and fro, torch in hand.

Well, at length the three descended, and piled their bags upon a great heap of nests, the result of many previous days' labour. Now came another fright! They would depart, of course, taking with them the rope or ropes by which they had descended. Alas! I had no hope; for although they would doubtlessly return the next day, and the next, it could not alter my position. I had but a choice of deaths—starvation or assassination. Yes—there was one faint chance left. I might, after they had left, discover a hiding-place in the entrance, in which I could await until they had passed the following day into the cavern and commenced their labours, then reach the top by means of their rope. But again, supposing even that I succeeded in gaining the top, I should have to

fight my way past the man who, in all probability, would be on guard at the rope. However, be that as it might, I determined to accept the risk, for it was my only chance of escape. But again was the cup dashed from my lips, for, as the men were about quitting the cave, another entered.

“My masters,” he said, addressing the gatherers, “ye may, on your return homewards, take no sign of your late occupation with you. Such are the orders of the head-man to his children, for the Pangeran’s captain, Prabu, and his crew are even now nest-gathering in the caves, and he loves not those who encroach upon his master’s rights.”

The gatherers were taken by surprise, and gave vent to their indignation in no measured terms ; but most extraordinary to me, at least until I saw his face, was the conduct of the servant. At the very name of Prabu he trembled violently, and, begging that they would leave him what water and rice remained of the store they had brought with them in the morning, said he would stay in the cave, until Prabu and his companions had quitted the village. Who could this man be, that he should so tremble at the very name of Prabu ? Who, indeed ? However, the gatherers must have known full well his reason for avoiding my captain ; for, at once complying with his request, they quitted the cavern, and I very speedily shared their knowledge.

A full hour elapsed after their departure ere



I ventured to commence operations—not, indeed, till the slave, having partaken of his rice and water, stretched himself at full length upon the ground, to sleep, as he thought, in perfect security. Then, as his face was turned towards me, and the red glare of a fresh-lighted torch fell upon it, I started with surprise, for I recognised at once the Chinese thief To-ki.

The hunchback—my father's death—the abduction of Marie—all passed through my mind. My blood boiled indignantly; but thank Heaven, I murmured, a little prudence, and a clue to that mystery will be in my hands. The surprise and anxiety to escape did me good—at least, made me forget my soreness and bruises. When, from his hard breathing, I knew the fellow was asleep, with pistol in hand at half-cock, I stealthily advanced towards one of the bamboo-poles, and untying the cord from the lower joint, made a noose at one end; then, creeping towards my friend, and gently lifting his head and neck, I slipped it over his arms, and gave it one quick, violent jerk. The rogue awoke with a scream of fright. He could not, however, see the cause of his little difficulty, for I had thrown him upon his stomach, and was sitting astride his back, twisting the other end of the cord round his legs, as methodically as if I had been packing a box or trunk. During the operation Mr. To-ki struggled, screamed, cried, implored, and

appealed to the god Fo, and the spirits of his ancestors, to come to the aid of the unfortunate To-ki, who was suffering at the hands of an evil demon (meaning me); but finding the ill-natured ghosts did not even return him a civil answer, he prayed of my demonship to let him off that time, and he would repent his sins, and for the future forego his evil practices; but getting no reply to this, he then appealed to me as the demon of the cave, and implored me to forgive him for robbing the place, saying in words to the following effect:

“The good demon is great, and will not condescend to punish the smallest of the small—the least of the very little—the insignificant To-ki! No, Mr. Demon, the wretched To-ki is not so bad as he seems. It is true that he is found in thy cave; but he was as the limb to the head, nothing but a poor slave, compelled to do the bidding of his masters.”

The superstitious wretch could not conceive the possibility of his being in the hands of a mortal, and it was as well for my purpose that he could not, for thus I might wring from his fears some information about Marie. Thus, in deep tones, and at the same time placing the cold barrel of the pistol upon his neck, I said:

“To-ki is a very great rogue, who has been guilty of so many crimes that the soles of his

feet must no longer be permitted to soil the earth. It is written that he must die."

Quivering in every nerve, and trembling in every muscle, the coward gave a piteous moan of despair. "Die," he whined, "among these rats of Javanese, and my bones be placed kingdoms away from the tombs of my ancestors! Alas! To-ki was born a wretch thus to have incurred the anger of the Demon!" Then, as a last appeal, he cried, "Can the miserable To-ki make no atonement for the past, no promises for the future, to induce the merciful demon to prolong his life only till he can carry his body where it may be laid in the tomb of his fathers?"

"So vile hath been thy sins, O To-ki, that the ghosts of thine ancestors—that is, if they are ghosts of good reputation—would kick thy bones out of their tomb as a disgrace! Nay, it is also written that thine own tomb shall never be swept."

At this nonsense the superstitious fellow groaned in despair, and at length, by way of propitiating my demonship, and so getting me to put a good word or two in for him with the ghosts of his forefathers, he offered to confess his sins. This being exactly what I had been fishing for, I said:

"The wretch To-ki was one of the thieves who robbed the house of Mynheer Ebberfeld!"

"He was! he was!—but then, good Mr. Demon, he was the slave of Huc-cuk."

“For what vile purpose, besides robbery, did Huc-cuk and his companions break into the house?”

“Truly, *that* must be known, as all things are, to so great and wise a demon.”

That answer was a poser; for it was only reasonable that my demonship should know all things—past, present, and future. Nevertheless, after a moment's thought, I continued, as I again rubbed the cold iron of the pistol against his neck:

“It is true that all the deeds of the wretched To-ki are known, but he must confess them aloud: so, if he would not have his bones for ever rest in this cave, let him speak. For what vile purpose, besides robbery, did Huc-cuk enter the house?”

“To steal away the girl,” he replied.

“Wretch! didst *thou* have aught to do with the slaying of that poor girl?”

“To-ki has been a rogue,” he replied, “but his hands are not stained with blood. The girl was not slain; she is alive even now.”

What a weight was removed from my heart!

“Then,” I asked, “for what purpose did Huc-cuk take the girl from her home?”

“Alas! good Mr. Demon, thy slave knows only that Huc-cuk carried her to the foot of the Blue Mountains, where he was met by those

who employed him, and into whose hands he gave her."

"Who and what were the names of the men who received the girl from Huc-cuk?"

"Alas! of that also is the miserable and insignificant To-ki ignorant, but, like him, they were slaves and tools in the hands of a master."

This answer was vexatious, and again I plied him with questions, but nothing more could I elicit. I did, however, find out that some time before he had fled from the hunchback, and had taken service with one of his countrymen, a merchant engaged chiefly in the bird's-nest trade, and that the latter—as big a rogue as himself—had sent him, as one of the crew of a junk which was then at anchor off the coast, to receive the nests gathered by the cave-robbing natives with whom he was in league.

Finding I could obtain no further information, I got off his back; and although I knew that he could scarcely move, I threatened him with speedy death and the vengeance of the whole community of demons, in which he believed, if he dared to turn his face upwards until he had my permission.

Passing through the opening, I found myself standing upon a narrow ledge of rock, with a rolling sea at a great distance beneath, but not more than a hundred feet from the summit. As

I had anticipated, the gatherers had left their rope, by means of which, and at the cost of much pain, I ascended.

The coast was clear—not a living soul to be seen. So far, so good. But where was I? Well, to ascertain, I clambered up the highest peak to survey the surrounding country, in the hope of discovering the whereabouts of the village; but no sign of human habitation met my eyes. No—naught but hill, dale, and thick jungle. The shades of night could not, I knew, be far off, but which way to turn puzzled me. I dared not remain—I feared to advance. Upon chance alone must I depend for assistance, and thus I invoked its good offices. Having a dollar in my pocket, I threw it into the air, resolving that head or tail should decide. If the former, I would proceed straight ahead; if the latter, I would take a direction totally the reverse. Straight ahead it was, and straight ahead down the hill I went, till I entered a wood: many of the trees were groaning beneath the weight of delicious fruits, upon which, I need scarcely say, I banqueted ravenously. A walk of about an hour brought me to a limpid stream: here I refreshed my inner man with copious draughts taken upon all-fours, and my outer by a luxurious bath; and now, if I had had no fear of such denizens of the woods and jungles as tigers and

snakes, I felt strong enough to walk the night through ; but even as it was, the remembrance that I still possessed a pistol and two or three charges gave me courage. So away I marched, endeavouring, by whistling a tune, to delude myself into a belief that I feared nought that could happen.

In a few minutes, however, my courage was put to the test. There was a rush in the surrounding jungle—a tiger, probably—at least, so I feared (for then I had never seen one of the brutes), and at once I began to scramble up the trunk of a large durian-tree near at hand ; but there was as much danger from above as from below, for I had disturbed a school or family of monkeys, who, chattering and screaming, hurled the fruit at me. Luckily, the animals were not skilled in taking aim, for a blow from one of them from any height must have stunned me ; and so I safely fixed myself astride a large branch some twenty feet from the ground, in a position in which I could see without being seen ; and the next instant a noble buck bounded forth and fell dead at the foot. It had a spike—the spike of a nest-gatherer—in its side, the owner of which, almost simultaneously, knelt by the body of the slain animal. The sight of a man made my heart rejoice ; but when in the hunter I recognised Prabu, my joy knew no bounds. Sliding down

the trunk, I was the next instant in his arms—yes, literally in his arms, and being hugged, too, with hearty goodwill.

“God is great! But did my young master drop out of the moon?” he exclaimed.

“No, only out of a durian-tree,” said I. But then Prabu’s men and my brother came running through the opening made by the deer and its slayer. The former, at first believing they saw a ghost, stopped short, as if contemplating a quick retreat; but Martin ran forward, and, embracing me, gave way to the most extravagant joy—hurrahing, dancing, and capering about. Then suddenly, with his eyes filled with tears, he said:

“Claud, Claud, old fellow, I never thought to see you again alive. Oh! *how* terrible have been the hours since we parted! You must have had a squeak for it. But,” he added, “in the name of all that’s gracious, what lucky chance has brought you to this spot, and at the very nick of time too?”

“A dollar,” I replied, for my mind was just then dwelling gratefully upon that coin.

“A dollar!” he repeated, with a look that betokened some notion that my adventure might have affected my reason.

“Aye, a dollar!—or more correctly, perhaps, your ‘fool’s providence’—*chance*.” And I related how it had come to pass that I had chosen that direction.



By this time the natives, who had become convinced that I was in reality something more substantial than a ghost, with Kati at their head, flocked about to exhibit their joy at my escape; and, after their national custom, began to walk around and *smell* me, as is the wont of cats at the sudden appearance of anything strange in the household in which they are domesticated.

“If these fellows possessed tails,” said Martin, laughing, “like cats, they would put them up at any strange animal coming among them. But now, old fellow, let us make for the village, or night will overtake us, and on the way tell us the story of your escape.” But just then Kati declared it to be his opinion that I could not walk, and bent his body forward.

“Another pussy movement,” cried Martin; “Kati is really putting his back up at you;” but without replying to this, I mounted pickback, and then, as Prabu and my brother walked, one on either side, I related to them my adventures, keeping for a more fitting opportunity the name of To-ki, and all that had reference to Marie’s abduction.

“By Jingo!” cried Martin, when I had concluded, “you have had a narrow escape. But let us thank God for His intervention—*He* alone has preserved you.”

To which my heart echoed, Amen; for deeply I felt that the power alone of the Most High could

have brought me through that great peril. Then Martin told me of the horror that had taken possession of him when I had fallen into that chasm, and how that, lighting the torch, he had endeavoured to peer through the darkness; that he had shouted down to me, hoping, by an answer, to get proof that I had not been killed, but hearing nothing but the echo of his own voice, he endeavoured to get back to Prabu as speedily as possible; but, in consequence of losing his way, he did not reach him till night, when, the torches having been all used, they could not search for me. Then, at daybreak that morning, my brother and his companions had made every effort to discover the chasm down which I had fallen, but they did not succeed even in finding the passage to it. Many others had they explored, but not that one; and at the time I had so fortunately encountered them, worn out with fatigue and dispirited, they were returning to the village, to organize another search-party among those of the natives most experienced in the intricacies of the caves.

“Terrible indeed must have been your feelings, dear Martin!” said I, at the conclusion of his recital. “But, surely, you must have given me up for lost; you never expected to see me again!”

“Well, Claud;” but half choking with emotion—with horror at the *might have been*, he brushed away the tears from his eyes, exclaiming, “Hang

it, old fellow, it is all right now ; we have you among us again, so let us be jolly. But I say, Prabu," he added, "what think you of these nest-robbers? Can you make any guess who and what they are?"

"Darkness is never long lasting, my young master. What is written is written: the light is coming, and the rogues will be known," was the reply; and more than that on the subject could not be got from him—at least at that time.

## CHAPTER X.

### I RECOGNISE THE NEST-ROBBERS.

VERY warm was the welcome I received from our host the head-man of the village, and his daughter the "handsome one." They met us at the door of their house, and were both very curious to learn the story of my escape, for neither had expected to see me again in the flesh. Following them into the principal reception-room, I intended to repeat to them the substance of what I had told my brother and Prabu ; but guess my surprise at seeing, squatting upon the floor, two of my unpleasant acquaintances the cave-robbers ; and by Prabu's countenance and manner, as he introduced these men to me as "the strong one" and "the weak one," I saw that he fully comprehended the meaning of my start and surprise.

These two worthies, I found, had heard from their father and sister the story of my being lost, and were earnest in their requests that I would tell them my adventures ; and I am afraid, I must

confess, that I found myself necessitated to fib myself out of the difficulty: for I told them that the chasm was no great depth after all, but that, falling head foremost, I had been stunned, and that on coming to, I managed to clamber up again, but then lost my way among the intricate passages, where I had been ultimately discovered by Prabu; who, by the way, did not evince the least surprise, either by word or gesture, at a story so different from that which I had told him, and by which I now felt convinced he understood that the cave-robbers and the men before us were identical. But Martin looked the very picture of astonishment: however—as an instant's reflection upon the fact that I had made no allusion whatever to the cave-robbers, told him that a strong reason existed for the discrepancy—he said nothing.

At the conclusion of my story, I expected that Prabu would, in some shape or other, have broached the subject of nest-gathering; but he was too much engaged, for he was talking soft nothings to the “handsome one,” and reciting, in tones not much above a whisper, the stock poem of all Javanese lovers—which, by the way, is sufficiently curious, and in English prose runs thus:—

“When my mistress looks forth from her window, her eye sparkling like a star, its brilliant rays glancing and glittering, her elder brother cannot support its lustre. Like the red mango is the

hue of her cheek, becoming her tapering neck, traversed with shadows whenever she swallows. Her features like those of a shadow or scenic figure; her forehead like the new moon in its first day; her eyebrows curved so fair I could devour her. Long has she been chosen to be my mistress,—wearing a ring set with gems of Sailan,—her long nails shining like lightning, transparent as a string of pearls;—her waist slender and extremely elegant,—her neck turned like a polished statue. Eloquent in the enunciation of her words. Her parting words like the crimson red wood; not by dress, but by herself adorned. *Black* are her teeth stained with *Baja* powder. Graceful, slender, appearing like a queen. Her locks adorned with the *Saraja* flowers; her features beautiful, with no defect of symmetry. My soul is often fluttering, ready to depart; glancing eagerly forth from my eyes, and quite unable to return to its station.”

When, however, the young lady had retired, Prabu entered into a conversation with his future brothers-in-law, from which I found that, in addition to other open-air occupations, they were gatherers of bees-nests, for the purpose of collecting the wax, a commodity much sought after by the Chinese merchants.

“My brothers have toiled long and hard these two days; have they been fortunate?” Prabu asked.

“Our elder brother’s words are good,” replied the “strong one;” “we *have* toiled long and hard, and have been rewarded by lucky days.”

“Then my brothers have been fortunate, and their house is filled with wax.”

“The worthy Prabu is right,” replied the “weak one,” but wincing a little, I thought, at the words, “we have been fortunate.”

“Then, without doubt, my brother will sell me a portion for the market at Singapore.”

“Alas! that the worthy Prabu did not express such a desire when last here, for it is impossible; it has been gathered for the Chinese merchant Lin, whose junk is even now in the western bay.”

“This is indeed unfortunate,” replied Prabu; “for the prahu is large, and the bird’s-nests less plentiful than we expected to find them.”

Then, evidently uneasy and desirous of changing the subject, the “weak one” said:

“Our brother has not heard the good news—we have discovered”—

“Another nest-cave!” interrupted Prabu, eagerly.

“Not so, my brother; nothing so fortunate for his highness the Pangeran; yet good, perhaps, for us and thou, who art to be the husband of our sister.”

“In Allah’s name, then, what is this thing you have discovered?”

“A mine of the metal *timah*” (tin), replied the “strong one.”

“A mine of *timah*!” repeated Prabu in astonishment; “God is great!—where?”

“Towards the setting sun, not three leagues from hence,” replied the “strong one;” who then explained that some few days before, while he and his brother had been out bees-nest hunting, they had ignited a large fire at the foot of a tree, and amongst the embers afterwards found some melted metal, which upon examination proved to be tin, and that, encouraged by the discovery, they had commenced digging and were rewarded by finding a vein of the ore.

“Truly it is a great discovery, and will enrich the finders—nay, the whole province;” but, glancing at Martin and me, he added, “Yet my brothers should have been more wary in making known their fortune before strangers, for should it come to the ears of our Dutch masters, like voracious hogs they will seize the treasure, even as they sought to do in the island of Bangka.”

“It is not possible the young sahibs, our brother’s friends, will betray this discovery, since it concerns him as much as ourselves,” replied the “weak one;” “but,” he added, “the sight will gladden the eyes of our brother; therefore let him accompany us to-morrow, and we will lead him to the spot.”



“My brother’s words are good—we need have no fear of the young sahibs. They come from the land of the English, and are too brave to rob their friend when his back is turned,” replied Prabu, with a meaning smile. “But,” he added, “the sleeping-mats await us, the sun will be in the heavens before our eyes are opened;” and the party at once sought their different rooms: the villagers, as will be seen hereafter, to scheme, Martin and I to sleep, and Prabu, perhaps, to dream of the advantages to be derived from this new discovery, which was to make the province as rich as the island of Bangka—in fact, another Cornwall. But a few words with my readers about tin and the tin mines of the Indian islands.

So important was the finding of tin in the island of Bangka regarded, that it has often been compared with the discovery of the great silver-mines of South America. In 1710, the son of the King of Palembang, sovereign also of Bangka, examining the *débris* of a consumed village, found a quantity of melted metal, which proved to be tin. Making this known to his father, the king ordered his miners to dig well in the ground, the result being the finding of a rich vein of ore. The Dutch, hearing of this, at once sought permission to establish a factory in the island; but the king, either knowing too much about the rapacity of the Hollanders, and being a man of larger mind

than most Asiatic sovereigns, or perhaps, and most probably, consulting his own interests, refused his permission to grant a monopoly, further declaring that *the island should be free for all nations to trade in*. And in less than thirty years from the discovery, so well did the ignorant natives mine, that the island yielded as much as Cornwall at the present time, and that, too, by a process of mining simple, easy, and cheap.

But to comprehend that process, let us first examine the geological formation of the island of Bangka. Well, it is chiefly *primary* rock. The principal mountains are of granite, and those of inferior elevation of red ironstone. In the low tracts between these the tin ore is found, and hitherto always in alluvial deposits, seldom further than 25 feet from the surface. The strata in which it is found are always in a horizontal direction, and consist as follows:—First, or uppermost, one-and-a-half feet of vegetable mould; second, eight feet of black clay; third, six feet of grey clay, intermixed with sand; fourth, six feet of black clay; and fifth, or bottom-most, six feet of coarse sand, of semi-transparent colour, bedded in pure white clay. Immediately beneath the last stratum occurs the bed or *stream* of tin ore, disseminated in coarse fragments of granite and other primitive rocks, and of various degrees of depth.

As for the mine itself, it is nothing else than

a large oblong pit, made by excavating the ground, in a perpendicular direction, to a depth of from 15 to 25 feet, to remove the superincumbent strata of sand and clay, and get at the ore. The first opening is seldom above 100 feet in length, and if the ore is discovered to lie below the usual depth, the situation, in the present abundance of mineral, will be neglected for a more favourable one. The mines are divided into *large* and *small*, called respectively, in the language of the country, *kolong* and *kulit*. It is in the first only that the process of mining is carried to any degree of refinement, and that machinery is employed. The Chinese alone are engaged in working these, and the average number of hands employed in each mining operation is from 25 to 30. The whole of the labourers work on terms of equality, the older and more experienced directing, and the younger and more active performing the operative part, while all share equally in the profits. Fortunately, it has been found impracticable to make the Chinese labour on any other terms.

The whole process for obtaining the metal consists of *mining*, *washing*, and *fusing*; of each of these I shall supply a very brief sketch, in their natural order. The situation for opening a new mine is determined by some indications of the existence of the mineral, well known to the experienced Chinese, and by the usual test of *boriug*.

The ground being first cleared of the huge primeval forest which covers all Bangka, the miners begin methodically to remove the alluvial strata to get at the ore. In large mines, of a superficies of 100 feet by 80, this operation, conducted by 25 or 30 workmen, will occupy about from three to four months. The earth is removed by little baskets, a pair of which are suspended, according to the usual custom of the East, from a beam or lever across the shoulders of the workmen. The rough trunk of a forest-tree, felled upon the spot, and having steps cut into it, constitutes the ladder by which the descent and ascent into the mine is effected. The smaller mines, besides being generally more superficial, are commonly situated upon acclivities, and thus an accumulation of water seldom incommodes the mining; but the larger ones are more frequently in valleys, and soon filled with water, which it is necessary to remove. This is effected by a common and cheap hydraulic Chinese machine. Sometimes a canal is made to pass close to the mine, for the purpose of facilitating the labour of removing the upper strata of sand and clay, which are thrown into it as extracted, and thus carried off by the stream. This is, of course, practicable only in situations where the fluid has a considerable impetus. The stratum of tin is pursued by a succession of pits, following the first opening or shaft.

The *washing* of the mineral is performed in a manner remarkably cheap and easy ; the numerous mountain streams, which characterize the physical aspect of Bangka, in common with all the other considerable islands of this tropical region, are the sources of this facility. When there is much room for selection, it becomes a material object to choose a mine in the neighbourhood of such mountain-stream, which is either itself, or a canal from it, directed to the neighbourhood of the mine, where an aqueduct is regularly formed, the sides of which are carefully lined with the bark of the large forest-trees of the neighbourhood. Into this trench the ore previously accumulated on its bank is gradually thrown in, while a rapid stream of water is made to pass through it, the labourer agitating the materials with a hoe. The earth and sand are carried off by the water. The ore and large stones by their gravity subside, when the latter are separated from the former by manual labour, with the occasional use of sieves. The purified ore thus obtained is removed to sheds erected for the purpose, and which contain the furnaces and apparatus for *smelting*.

The process of smelting is usually performed once a year, or, in a very productive season, twice. The furnace is ten feet long, four wide, and composed of clay. The bellows, or ventilator, is a piece of timber about twenty-five inches in

diameter, having a bore of seventeen or eighteen inches, admitting a piston. It is made of a single tree, and its fabrication requires considerable skill. This engine, plied by three stout workmen, keeps up a constant blast on the furnace. A quantity of ignited charcoal is first thrown into the furnace, which continues, as long as the process of smelting goes forward, to be fed alternately with ore and coals. In due time, and when the furnace is heated, the metal begins to flow, in a full stream, from an aperture for the purpose in the bottom of the floor, and is received into a basin, from which in time it is removed, by a ladle, into moulds made of moist sand, formed near the furnace. The size of these moulds gives slabs or ingots of metal weighing 50 katis, or  $66\frac{2}{3}$  lbs. This operation serves the double purpose of smelting and roasting the ore. It is always conducted in the night-time, to avoid the heats of the day, which would be inconvenient in that climate to the labourers. In the course of one night 5,280 lbs. of ore are smelted, which, at an average, afford 44 or 45 ingots of metal, or 3,062 lbs.

The outlay of capital, according to this mode of extracting tin, is trifling. Besides the waterwheel, ventilator, and shed, including the furnaces, it consists of the charges for pickaxes, spades, hoes, shovels, and a few cheap wheelbarrows after a Chinese construction. The very woods cut down

on the site of the mines afford the necessary charcoal for smelting. The whole of the processes described are conducted by the Chinese. The miners are scattered over the island, according to the direction of the mines. Besides the immediate labourers in the mines, many others are connected with them, being engaged either in raising food and necessaries, or in fabricating the tools and other materials required in the processes of mining, washing, and smelting. Among these are blacksmiths, carpenters, charcoal-burners, gardeners, &c. In the present state of population, the corn consumed by the workmen is more cheaply imported than grown. The simplicity of the various processes of mining industry is such, that little previous training is necessary. The only exception to this is the business of the smelter, which is always a separate trade. The miners are almost all natives of China, and, notwithstanding the difference of climate and the severity of their occupations, enjoy good health.

Besides the tin extracted by the Chinese, by the intelligent processes now described, an inconsiderable quantity is obtained by the natives, by very rude processes. The masters of the island, the Malays, or at least the people of Palembang, imitate the Chinese at an humble distance, and extract the ore by means similar to those practised by the latter in the *small* mines. The aborigines

follow still ruder processes: they mine in the form of a narrow cylindrical shaft, capable of admitting one person only, and if the bed of ore be found productive, follow it at the risk of their lives under the alluvial strata, which often fall in upon them. They have no waterwheel, no aqueduct: to avoid the accumulation of water, they *must* always mine on the acclivities of elevated tracts, and for washing the mineral, it must be conveyed, as it is extracted, to the nearest rivulet. In smelting, they use small furnaces, and instead of the large and effectual ventilator of the Chinese, the common Malay bellows, described in the first chapter of this work, is employed by them. The metal is even transported to the market with inferior skill; and to facilitate its conveyance, is cast into much smaller slabs than those of the Chinese, by which distinction it is known in the markets. The different conditions of the three races of men, in point of industry and civilization, is distinctly portrayed in their respective manner of pursuing the process of mining.



## CHAPTER XI.

### A SEARCH FOR A MARE'S-NEST.

"I SAY, Claud," cried Martin, as soon as we were alone.

"No, don't—don't say anything now; for I am knocked up with fatigue and sore bones, and want to tumble off to sleep at once."

"Ah! but I *must*, old fellow. What a confounded fib you told!"

"To whom?" I replied, reddening with indignation.

"Well, to the bee-hunters, or to Prabu and me; for the two stories were about as much alike as black and white."

"Not to *you*, Martin. As for the chief's sons, had I told them the truth, depend upon it I should have had a creese in my side before the morning."

"Ah! I see," he replied, thoughtfully. "It *is*, then, as I imagined; they *are* the nest-robbers you

saw in the cave. I knew that a fellow who had never been guilty of a falsehood in his life could not fabricate such a tarradiddle without some great motive."

"You are right, Martin: they are the selfsame men, as you might easily have guessed from Prabu's behaviour."

"Ah! but that is what I cannot understand. If he *knew* them to be cave-robbers, why did he not accuse them there and then?"

"Is he not the betrothed of their sister? But be patient, Martin, and you will find that he has some scheme in his mind for their confusion, if not punishment."

"Nay, Claud, that can scarcely be; for did he not jump at the opportunity of going with them to-morrow in search of the tin-ore?"

"That tin-ore story, Martin, is all fudge, and the invitation is only to get Prabu away, while their companions carry the birds'-nests they have collected from the cave, perhaps down to the Chinese junk of which you heard them speak: at least, that is my opinion, and to-morrow will prove whether I am correct. But now, old fellow, do let me go to sleep." And go to sleep I did, leaving Martin to work out what discoveries he might during the night; and he made the best use of his time, for scarcely had I opened my eyes in the morning, than he said:

"Claud, you were right; those fellows, the bee-hunters, are hatching mischief."

"Oh! that's your opinion now, is it, most sapient Martin? Did I not say as much last night?"

"No, not my opinion: I *know* it."

"*How?* What mean you?"

"Well, about the middle of the night, when it was but natural to think everybody was asleep, that fellow they call the 'strong one' went down to the seaside and had speech with the captain of a Chinese junk which is anchored nearly in-shore."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, with surprise; "but how know you this? Did you dream it?"

"Dream it, bother, no! Couldn't sleep—heard a noise—got up—saw the fellow creeping along—followed him at a respectful distance: you know the rest; and now I have told you all. What do you think of it?"

"Why, that my suspicions are confirmed. But we must tell Prabu."

"Then now is your time, for here he is," said Martin, as the captain entered the room, to ask us whether we would go with Kati and the men to the cave, or with him and the bee-hunters.

"Before we answer you, listen to what my brother has to say," said I; and Martin repeated what he had just told me. For a moment he

pondered, but then, to our astonishment, laughingly said :

“It is nothing—it means nothing injurious to me. Surely these men are my brothers, and may go to and fro without their motives being questioned !”

“Prabu,” said Martin, wincing a little at this rebuke, “you are a queer fellow ; I can’t make you out ; you mean more than you say.”

“That is better than to say more than I mean ; but how choose my masters ?”

“Let us go with Prabu, Claud,” said Martin.

“With all my heart,” I replied ; “for I believe I have had enough of the caves, at least for some time to come.” And so with Prabu and his two brothers-in-law that were to be we set out, the latter being laden with implements of their trade—namely, a bundle of the husks of cocoanut-shells, a quantity of small bamboo-sticks, and stout rattans.

Of course, the ostensible purpose of the journey had been to examine the tin. Strangely enough, however, after traversing hill, dale, and forest for some ten miles, and a careful search in every direction, the precious vein remained *non est*. The worthy brothers had, they declared, carelessly forgotten to mark the whereabouts. Now, to one who, like Prabu, had given up a day’s profitable occupation in the caves, such a dis-

appointment should have been vexatious ; but the worthy captain did but smile and gently chide the brothers, and beg of them to re-discover and well mark the spot by the time he again visited the caves—adding, philosophically, “Allah is great! What is written is written : every day cannot be a fortunate one.” Martin and I, however, felt much chagrined, for we were convinced that the worthy brothers had, for some purpose of their own, been hoaxing us.

“Verily,” said Martin to me, in confidence, “our friend Prabu must be a little daft, or he would not so good-humouredly take a day’s hunt for a ‘mare’s-nest’ for the profitable gathering in the caves.”

“Let us bide our time,” I replied, with more confidence in Prabu, and feeling quite certain that some kind of *ruse*, although unknown to us, was in preparation to give the *honest* bee-hunters a *quid pro quo*.

Well, we had wasted the day in this fruitless search ; but as, towards evening, on our return, we entered a dense jungle, the “strong one” called out that we were near the bees’-nests. Upon hearing this, we all felt enlivened ; and our three companions began to cut the branches of a palm, in which labour they were assisted by Martin and me. Each having our arms full, followed the “strong one” to the foot of a huge tree, at which

we laid our loads. The brothers then, throwing upon the branches cocoa-husks, lighted their torches; then, having repeated a Mahomedan prayer, which concluded with "God, He is God, and Mahomed is His Prophet!" kindled a fire; then, continuing to wave their torches around them—partly to keep off the bees when they should come down, and partly in the belief that it would ensure a good hive of wax—awaited the rising of the smoke and flames in sufficient quantities to arouse the insects. By the way, Mr. Spenser St. John, late Consul-General in Borneo, thus describes the manner of taking bees'-nests in that the largest of the Indian islands:—

"The natives obtain beeswax from the nests built on the tapang-tree, and climb the loftiest heights in search of it upon small sticks, which they drive *as they advance* up the noble stem, that rises above a hundred feet free of branches, and whose girths vary from fifteen to five-and-twenty feet. Once these pegs are driven in, their outer ends are connected by a stout rattan, which, with the tree, forms a kind of ladder.

"It requires cool and deliberate courage to take a beehive at so great an elevation, where, in case of being attacked by the bees, the almost naked man would fall and be dashed to atoms. They depend upon the flambeaux they carry up with them, as, when the man disturbs the hive, the

sparks falling from it cause, it is said, the bees to fly down in chase of them, instead of attacking their real enemy, who then takes the hive and lowers it down by a rattan-string. The bees escape unhurt. This plan does not appear to be as safe as that pursued by the Pakatan Dyaks, who kindle a large fire under the trees, and, throwing green branches upon it, raise so stifling a smoke that the bees rush forth, and the man, ascending, takes their nest in safety. Both these operations are generally conducted at night, although the second might be, I imagine, practised in safety during the day."

But to return to my narrative. As the dense smoke now reached the hives, the little insects came forth by thousands; and the two brothers, clambering up the tree, dislodged the nest, finding in it, to their great delight, a wealth of honey and wax, chiefly the latter—which, by the way, constitutes a very valuable and considerable article of commerce in Java, from whence large quantities are annually exported to China and Bengal. As for honey, it is very scarce, and for the following reasons: Bees are not domesticated in Java, nor indeed, with rare exceptions, in any part of Asia; the wandering habits to which these insects are encouraged at all seasons, by the perpetual succession of flowers, would render domestication very difficult. It being, consequently, unnecessary

for them to lay up a store of provision in a climate where there are flowers all the year round, their honey is small in quantity; while, from the quality of the vegetation, it is naturally of much inferior flavour to that of higher latitudes.

Their success in taking this fine hive encouraged them to continue the hunt; and after three more fires, we returned to the village with as many hives, greatly to the delight of the brothers "weak one" and "strong one," and, I may add, to that of Prabu; for, of the four hives, he claimed and obtained two as his share, a portion of which was awarded between Martin and me.

Upon reaching the house of the head-man, we found it almost impossible to obtain an entrance, in consequence of a crowd of people, who were clamouring for justice upon a poor old woman, whom they had brought before the chief, and accused of killing a man. Forcing our way into the large hall, where the chief was holding his bed of justice, we heard the case; and a very curious one it was, as illustrating the superstitious habits of the people. It appeared that a young man becoming suddenly mad, his friends had taken him immediately to the old lady, who was the acknowledged physician of the village. Well, Mrs. Doctor, having prescribed several spells and incantations, which proved useless, next recommended an infallible cure. The patient's head, in



fact, was to be placed over a pot of ignited sulphur until his senses returned. Accordingly, he was held in this position by several of the stoutest men, who rendered all his struggles to get away vain, until Mrs. Doctor considered he had had a sufficient dose; but that, unfortunately, was not until the great physician Death stepped in; whereupon the friends, who had hitherto possessed such faith in their female leech, at once charged her with murder and took her before the chief; who, after patiently hearing the case, very properly exonerated the woman, but ordered her, under penalty of death, never to try that particular prescription again, since experience had proved it not to be one of those legally admissible, inasmuch that it was certain to kill or cure, but one that, sure as fate itself, would *kill* and *not* cure; and thus ended the only *cause célèbre* I ever saw tried in a Javanese village.

The old chief seemed that evening to be in an especially good humour. He congratulated our party for its success in bees'-nesting, and condoled with Prabu upon his disappointment with respect to the tin-mine; but the latter laughed it off, and even refused to be consoled with one of the other two hives: nay, with our permission as far as our share went, he presented the old gentleman with his own two, as a compliment to his betrothed, "the handsome one." This generosity the chief

acknowledged by loading the table (*i. e.* floor) with all the dainties of a Javanese village, not forgetting flagons of the strong rice-spirit. The latter, however, Prabu scarcely touched ; but withal we spent a very jolly evening, and by their countenances I could see that the joviality of our hosts did not decrease when, shortly after, Kati joined us. The captain surprised us all by declaring that, as he had now obtained his cargo of nests and the prahu was ready for sea, he intended to sail at daybreak. On the contrary, they became clamorous in their wishes for his prosperity, and drank so deeply to his speedy return, that Martin and I were not a little rejoiced when we found ourselves once more alone and stretched upon our sleeping-mats.

“ There is something brewing,” said my brother.

“ Perhaps it is already brewed, and only awaiting tapping,” said I. “ But we shall see : ‘ Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.’ ”

“ Bother your musty old saws ! ” cried Martin. “ Can’t you tell me what you think of this sudden resolve of Prabu’s to sail to-morrow ? You know it is all stuff about having his cargo ready and on board. Why, he had but half a cargo yesterday.”

“ Ah, brother mine ! but perhaps some kind fairy, by way of consoling him for his disappointment touching the tin-mine, has supplied him with the other half.”

“Nonsense, Claud, it was no disappointment; you know that he believed it all a hoax.”

“I *know* nothing, Martin: I can only guess and hope.”

“But what do you guess and hope, then?”

“That would indeed be tellings, Martin. Why, it would be giving you the end of a story before you had got half through. No, it would spoil the whole; so rest contented, or guess for yourself.” And then Martin went to sleep in a very bad humour. In justice, however, to myself, I was bound by Prabu not to tell living soul either what I *knew* or *guessed* without his permission.

## CHAPTER XII.

### WE BITE THE BITERS, BUT ARE OVERHAULED BY A DUTCH CRUISER.

VERY affectionate was the leave-taking between Prabu and the chief's family—nay, even Martin and I shared in the kind words and presents of fruits and rice-bread. It seemed, indeed, as if they had a difficulty in finding words sufficient to express their joy at our visit and their sorrow at our departure. Moreover, they would see the last of us, and so they accompanied us to the very edge of the water. Warmly Prabu thanked them for their hospitality.

“It is good,” he said, as he stepped into the boat that was to take us to the prahu, “that my friends rejoice at our success this season in gathering nests; but great indeed would be their rejoicing, if they but knew its *real extent*..”

At this the “strong one” seemed to be a little uneasy, as if his suspicions had become excited, and, coming in advance of the others, he said :

“It may be long ere we meet again my brother,—perhaps never—who knows? It will be a satisfaction, then, if I take my last leave on board the prahu.” But Prabu, gently putting him aside, stepped into the boat, and, as the rowers were pushing her off, said :

“Great, indeed, has been the kindness of my brothers and father! Prabu’s gratitude shall be no less; for as soon as his feet rest upon the deck of the prahu, he will send them some presents, which will long keep his name green in their memories.”

“Now, Prabu,” said Martin, “tell me *why* it is that the prahu is half a mile from the shore, and riding at single anchor only?” But the captain, whose eyes were still fixed upon the party ashore, instead of replying, burst forth into an extravagant fit of laughter.

“Surely our friend is a little mad!” said Martin, queerly.

“Never mind, Martin; wait awhile, and those fellows ashore will become madder still.”

“Have you both lost your senses? Will you, or will you not, tell me the meaning of all this?” cried my brother, angrily.

“When we reach the prahu,” I replied.

Martin threw himself back in the boat in a sulky fit. As soon, however, as we stepped on deck, he cried :



KATI'S PRISONERS.



“I see it all. By Jingo, what a clever trick!” and then burst into a louder fit of laughter than Prabu. And well he might: for there upon their knees, with their hands tied and their long tails fastened together, were six Chinese sailors; while Kati stood with a rattan-cane in his hand, threatening to beat them if they did not hold their tongues.

“Now Kati,” said Prabu, “I have promised to send those fellows ashore a present, by which they may keep our visit fresh in their memories.”

This was sufficient: Kati knew what was to follow; and coupled by their tails, twos and twos, the prisoners were tossed into the sea, and they would have swam well, but every now and then they stopped to quarrel at the violent pulls they gave at each other’s heads.

“A present of game—three brace of Chinamen,” said Martin, laughing. “But, Claud,” he added, “it was foul sailing not to tell me this scheme.”

“My dear Martin, my silence was at Prabu’s desire. He believed it to be necessary for the success of his scheme.”

“It was,” interposed Prabu; “but let the Sahib Martin listen. When,” he continued, “the Sahib Claud told us of the new cave and the nest-robbers, I determined to make it known to the head-man, and ask his aid in searching out the



thieves ; but when I saw the sahib startle at the sight of my two brothers that are to be, and heard him relate to them an account of his adventures so different from that which he had told us, I felt convinced that they were the robbers. However, to be quite certain, at night—it was the same that the Sahib Martin followed the ‘strong one’ to the seashore—I stole to the Sahib Claud’s bedside, and found from him that my suspicions were correct. I then, of course, guessed that the discovery of the tin-mine was false, and the invitation to accompany them the next day only given in order to get me out of the way, while the Chinese captain and his men could carry the nests from the cave to the ship. My first impulse was to seize the rogues and send them to the Pangeran for punishment ; but, then, they were the brothers of the ‘handsome one,’ and I resolved only to outwit them ; but that I might do that effectually, I desired the Sahib Claud not to divulge even to you anything he knew or might know. Well, having accepted the invitation to accompany the rogues in search of the tin-mine, I left orders with Kati to hide with his men in the jungle, near the shore where the junk was anchored ; so that when the Chinese came down with the nests, they could seize and carry them on board the prahu. How well he obeyed these orders you are aware. I did not, however, know of his success until he joined

us last night ; but learning it then, I at once announced my intention of sailing this morning."

"How jolly clever altogether!" exclaimed my brother, admiringly.

"Look, Martin, I told you those fellows ashore would soon be madder than me or Prabu," I cried, pointing landwards ; for the Chinese had by that time swam ashore and told their tale, and the chief and his sons were screaming, shouting, and flourishing their creeses in the air. Prabu, taking the white linen from round his head, waved adieu, which taunt so exasperated the "strong one," that he leaped into the sea and begun to swim towards the vessel—a very great piece of folly, by the way, at the rate we were running before the wind, and which he was soon compelled to relinquish.

"But Prabu," said my brother, seriously, "won't you lose your sweetheart? For you know you will not dare show your face among them again."

"Oh, no!" replied the captain, laughing. "My dear brothers are so mad now that they would 'run a muck' if they could get near us ; but they will soon cool down, and then they will remember that I have shown them mercy ; for they know that did I make their roguery known to the Pangeran, his highness would have the whole family uprooted from the village. Remembering this, the next time I visit them they will receive

me with open arms, and laugh at the superior cunning that outwitted them."

"But have you not punished yourself, Prabu," asked Martin, "by quitting the coast with so small a cargo?"

"Not so," he replied; "for the nests taken from the rogues double in quality and quantity—at least, so says Kati—any we could have gathered for the next moon. Truly," he concluded, "God is great! This cave is a wonderful discovery!" and then he went to look after the placing of his cargo; and, my brother and I being alone, I took the opportunity of recurring to that portion of my adventures in the cave which I knew would so much interest him.

"Do you remember that Chinese fellow, Martin, we tied up in the mosquito-curtains the night of the robbery at Mynheer's house?"

"Remember him, Claud! Is it possible I can ever forget the rascal, or that night when poor Marie was stolen from us? But why do you ask?"

"Well, I have seen and spoken to him."

"When—where—how?" he cried, seizing my arm.

I then related my adventure with Toki; but instead of expressing his joy at the news of Marie's being still alive, he complained that I had not discovered by whom she had been stolen away.

“Claud—Claud!” he cried, “you have behaved unkindly, cruelly, unbrotherly! You should have told me all this the night before we went bee-hunting; and, instead of accompanying those rogues, I would have gone to the cave, and forced from the fellow at least some clue to the person or persons who instigated the kidnapping of our cousin.”

“It would have been useless, Martin, for the man was a mere tool of the hunchback, and knew no more than he told me; while you would have endangered Prabu’s plans and our own safety. Patience, brother, patience, and we will discover Marie yet.”

But words were useless; Martin considered himself aggrieved, and was angry and almost surly with me for a long time—at least, that day and the next—a very long time for him.

One night, while running through the China Seas for Singapore—at which place Prabu told us that he should find a profitable market for his nests—as Martin and I were alone on deck keeping watch, we were startled by a most extraordinary noise. At first I took it to be the beating of an Indian tom-tom in the distance; but no—that was impossible, for we were far from the land, and no canoe was near. Then it struck me that it resembled the buzzing of a multitude of bees. Whatever it was, it caused a tremulous

motion ; for, placing my hand upon the side of the prahu, I could distinctly feel it.

“What can it be, Martin?” said I. “Are we grinding over the top shoots of a coral forest, or is it a shoal of sucking-fish mistaking the junk for a shark?”

“It sounds to me like the hissing of a myriad of serpents,” replied my brother, and his surmise was not unreasonable ; for in those seas, yellow and black snakes are very numerous, and it was possible we might be cutting through a mass of floating spawn—but then the water would have exhibited a phosphoric sparkling. Thus, not knowing to what to ascribe it, and fearing that it might be something dangerous to the prahu’s bottom, I awoke Prabu, who was asleep in the deck-cabin, and advised him to have the well sounded ; but he laughed heartily, and, much to our chagrin, said the noise was caused by a shoal of “drumming-fish.” These creatures, which are peculiar to those seas, are of large size, very ugly, with a kind of bladder under the throat ; totally unfit for human food, and capable of making themselves distinctly heard while passing under the bottom of a vessel, even though at a depth of seven fathoms. After this I pondered some time before offering our captain advice—touching, at least, the safety of the vessel.

The following day we met with an incident

equally ludicrous, although of a more vexatious if not mischievous kind. About mid-day, while we were hiding from the burning sun under deck-awnings, we were startled by the report of a great gun, and, jumping to our feet, saw a large ship bearing towards us.

"It is a Dutch war-sloop," said Prabu.

"Aye," said Martin, "I can see that by her flag; but that's no reason why she should send that ball of iron across our bows."

"See," replied Prabu, "her captain is signalling us to hove to, while he sends an officer on board."

"To what are we indebted for the honour of the visit?" I asked, as soon as Prabu had given the order to obey the Dutchman.

"He takes us for Chinese or Malay pirates. Like the English, the Dutch will permit no thieves in the East but themselves—at least, when they can prevent it."

"Come, I say, Prabu, that's scarcely civil, considering that we are Englishmen."

But our captain had no time for reply: the war-sloop's boat was alongside, and in it a dozen sailors, armed with cutlasses and pistols, and a boy-officer, very short, very stout, and very consequential.

"Hilloa, you rogues!" said this stripling, as he stepped upon deck, "where do you hail from, to

what port are you bound, and what have you on board?"

"From Java, and bound for Singapore, laden with birds'-nests," was the reply.

"Laden with *what?*" asked the youngster, in astonishment.

"Birds'-nests," replied Prabu, touching his cap, or rather the covering of his head; but the youngster—evidently a fresh arrival in those seas, and who had heard of no birds'-nests excepting those he had himself taken in his school-days—flew into a violent passion.

"You impudent rogue, do you dare to make fun of one of their high mightinesses' officers?" he roared. "Birds'-nests, indeed! I'll birds'-nest the lot of you—a precious greenhorn you must take me for!"

Now, I did not at all like the young man's tone; still, knowing he possessed the power to cause us much annoyance, if he chose to use it, I went up to him, and touching my cap, as bound by etiquette to a naval officer, said:

"Indeed, it is true that we are only laden with birds'-nests."

"Oh! *you* are putting a spoke in, are you? Who, pray, are you that speak Dutch, and are yet found among these rascally pirates?"

At these insulting words, Martin, who had less respect for their high mightinesses' uniform than his elder brother, cried:

"Stand by, Claud. Come, Mr. Midshipman, for all that cocked hat and dirk of yours, you are exceeding your duty. You were not sent here to insult honest traders."

"You impertinent rascalion—!"

"You queer little cockatoo, if you call me names I'll hit you," said Martin quite coolly, but beginning to show fight; which so frightened me, that I caught his arm, saying:

"For Heaven's sake, come away."

"Bother!" replied Martin, releasing himself. "We are not in the Dutch pay, and I don't care a rap for his cockatooship."

"Here, Hans," cried the enraged midshipman, "tow that chap into the boat; the sloop's short of powder-monkeys." But as the man so called advanced to obey the order, Martin darted past him, and struck the officer a blow that made him reel. This caused the latter to shout "Mutiny!" the sailors flourished their cutlasses, and the prahu's men, with their creeses in their hands, prepared for a fight; but Martin, at once brought to a sense of the folly he had committed, and knowing the dangerous position he had placed us all in, cried:

"Stand back, no fighting. Let them take me on board the sloop, and if the captain is a gentleman, he will soon release me."

"The young sahib is right—they cannot detain



him ; put up your creeses," cried Prabu ; then, addressing the midshipman again, he said :

" Sahib, by Mahommed I swear, we are only birds'-nesters ;" but the middy, almost choking with rage, replied :

" Silence, you rogue ! Pretty big birds they must be to require a couple of six-pounders to rob them of their nests." Then, turning to his men, he added — " I'll birds'-nest them. Off with the hatches, and let us examine their cargo."

Now, officer and men had expected that this order would have caused a stout resistance on our side ; guess, therefore, their surprise when Prabu himself led them into the hold, and, instead of the treasure we were supposed to have as pirates, they saw nothing but sacks of foul-smelling, muddy, and slimy swallows'-nests. The men were dumb-founded, and as ignorant as their officer, for, perhaps, none of them had ever been in these seas before.

" Rum ! isn't it, Hans ?" said one of the sailors to a messmate.

" I take it it's ballast ; but, anyhow, they must have been hard up for shingle where they came from, to put such sludge in her, and in bags too !"

Observing the chagrin and disappointment of the middy—who evidently could not make up his mind what course to take, and, perhaps, felt more than half ashamed of himself—I endeavoured to explain to him the uses of the nests ; but,

alas for himself! he was more unbelieving than ever.

“*Eat* these things!” he said, with disgust. “It is a lie, youngster; pigs couldn’t do it.”

“Aye, your honour,” interposed one of his men; “it’s a yarn ’d be unbeliev’d by the marines, and in my opinion it’s a blind.”

“Aye, aye, Hans, a blind it is, no doubt; still there is no proof on board that they are pirates.” Then to Prabu he said, “You are lucky this cruise, my fine fellow, and we have lost our prize-money. We shall, however, catch you yet;” and having, I suppose, become tired of his visit, he left the prahu—politely, however, intimating to us that, if we spread sail until he had returned and made his report to the captain, he would sink us. Accordingly, we waited, but the boat-party had not long been on board again before a signal was hoisted, telling us we might continue our voyage; so I suppose the captain must have known more about birds’-nesting and its commerce in the Indian Archipelago than his young officer. And a pretty quizzing the whole boat-party must have got from their shipmates!—and as I thought of this, I regarded the whole affair as a good joke, but not so Martin, who more than once said:

“If ever I meet that little cockatoo in uniform ashore, I’ll just pull his ears till they are as hot as a couple of furnaces.”

By the way, a good story is told of a similar incident that happened during the last war between England and Spain—so good that I will repeat it. A certain English captain, as ignorant of the nature and value of the edible-nest as our midshipman, and who was keeping an eager look-out for prizes in the Indian seas, fell in with a Spanish ship. Boarding her, they found her laden with the filthy-looking things, which the Spanish commander affirmed to be *birds'-nests*. The Englishman was at first indignant that a trading captain should attempt to play off such a joke upon him, and, believing that there was treasure of some kind hidden beneath the bags, he caused a narrow search to be made; yet, although nothing could be found, he still believed the Spaniard to have been playing a joke with him—in fact, to have been trying the extent of his credulity. Thus, by way of turning the tables, he seized the ship, to sell her for the value of her hull only. The rest of the story shall be given in the words of its relater:—

“He then gave orders that a midshipman and three or four of his worst men should take charge of her, and run her into the nearest port. One rational thing he did was to remove the Spanish prisoners to his own brig, or they would have soon retaken her. Thus he left her, and it was not until he himself had put into a Chinese port, and accidentally mentioned the occurrence as a joke

against the Spaniards, that he learnt the value of the prize.

“ The edible birds’-nests were, at the time, selling in the Chinese market at thirty-two Spanish dollars a *kattie*, so that, on a computation of the quantity in the vessel, she was worth from *eighty to ninety thousand pounds* : and he, poor fellow !—that had served twenty years without clearing twenty pounds prize-money—could have made a fortune. He raged and stormed, and went to sea again to look after her. He offered up prayers, for the first time in his life, for her safe arrival in port. But it was decreed otherwise : the few lubberly fellows he had put on board were not sufficient to work her, and she was wrecked on the coast of China.

“ A galleon of gold-dust would not have been such a windfall to the Chinese as was this cargo of nests. The news spread like wildfire through the country, that a vessel had stranded on their coast containing incalculable wealth. The timid Celestials forgot their fears, and, regardless of winds and seas, rushed through the foaming surf—trampled the strong over the weak, brother over brother—all hurrying on board the wreck, which was so effectually pillaged that she was left floating like an empty tea-chest, not a grain of cargo being left sticking to her ribs. During the scramble in the water and on the wreck—for every handful was fought for—many lives were lost ; and the coast,

for several miles round, was in anarchy and confusion a long time after."

At length, after a six days' run through the Straits of Malacca—those straits so remarkable for their redundancy of fish—so terrible to the natives of Singapore from the fierce savage tigers which are continually swimming across from the peninsula—and at the sight of Singapore, we were delighted: partly that we should again be able to stretch our legs, but chiefly that we should have some other food than fish, fish, eternally fish, for we had long since run short of rice and fruits. But the fish upon which we had been subsisting for the last few days had filled me with disgust, for to eat it gave one a notion of cannibalism; and I will tell you why. It more resembled a human being than a fish. It is the *dugong* (by some writers supposed to have been the original of the mermaid), of the order *Cestacea*, or *great beasts of the ocean*. Its body is very bulky, tapering to a broad horizontal tail. Instead of fins, it has two paws armed with talons, and which, but for being webbed, would resemble hands. Its head is almost of human shape, and it suckles its young in an upright position, holding it in one paw, while it supports itself in the water by means of the other. The natives of the islands are very fond of its flesh, which resembles young beef. But, bah! the animal is so human-looking, and the

females have such a strong attachment to their young, that when one of the latter is destroyed, the mother, it is said, utters sharp, plaintive cries, sheds tears, and easily permits herself to be taken. Now, are you surprised at my disgust at being compelled to eat of its flesh, more revolting even than that of young roasted monkeys—a favourite dish upon the mainland? But we have done with such food, for we are entering the harbour of Singapore—that town which, under British rule of forty years, has increased its population from two hundred to thirty thousand.

It was day-dawn when we arrived; the sky was just receiving its first bright tints from the rising sun, and the morning mists yet hung about the marshes. Nevertheless, early as it was, the harbour was alive with boats, and resounding with the noisy hum of awakened crowds. The long, low canoe of the Malay, propelled by thirty paddles, each stroke accompanied by their peculiar cry; sampans carrying ashore the Chinese mariner, with his fan and umbrella; other boats, with their clean matted seats and plantain-leaf awnings, waiting for passengers, and promiscuously manned by the Hindoo, the Moor, the Malay, the Arab, or the wild natives of Borneo, Amboyna, Madura, or Bali; the unwieldy junk with painted eyes, which the Celestials believe guide them safely clear of shoals and rocks—its large masts without rigging,

mast, sail; high-peaked stern, bedaubed with flying dragons, painted devils, and proverbs, and the poop entirely occupied by the indispensable Joss. Add to the foregoing—boats laden with fruit of every description, ready for the morning market; light fishing-canoes, with their patient occupants, who will sit for hours under the shade of their light grass hats; trading-vessels of several European nations; a British sloop-of-war;—and you have the scene presented to us upon our first arrival at Singapore.

## CHAPTER XIII.

WE SELL OUR NESTS, ARE TAKEN PRISONERS, BUT  
OUTWIT OUR CAPTORS.

THERE could be no greater proof of the value of our cargo than the extraordinary demand we found for it at Singapore. The news of its arrival in the harbour ran through the town like wildfire—at least among the Chinese portion of the community—and the very next day our little vessel was crowded with long-tailed merchants, as eager to outbid each other as Jew brokers at an auction-mart; and so courteous were these men to our captain, that, although at other times they would have treated him with contempt, the best of them now approached him in the “attitude of respect,” and with their *tails let down*. But let me explain the meaning of the latter sentence.

Chinese “men of business,” for greater convenience, twist their long tails round the tops of their heads; but to omit to drop them to their full length in the presence of a superior, or, what



to them is more, one from whom they expect to obtain a favour, is deemed in China as great a mark of ill-breeding as it would be in England for a person to enter a room with his hat on.

Thus, as you may imagine, from this demand Prabu realized a very large sum for his nests. Nevertheless, the whole cargo was sold to one man. But now commenced the most unpleasant part of our work, for we had to sort them into three different qualities, and pack them in boxes. This labour lasted about three weeks; and then, at least for a time, we were free to roam the island until we had taken another cargo of something—we knew not what—on board. But a few parting words about these nests.

From the fact of the nests being worth more than their weight in silver, it is evident that they are only articles of expensive luxury. They are consumed chiefly by people of rank, the greater part being sent for the consumption of the Court at Peking. The sensual mandarins use them, in the belief that they are powerfully stimulating and tonic; but it is most likely, that their most valuable quality is their being, like porridge, neither good nor harm. The Japanese, who resemble the Chinese in many of their habits, have no taste for the edible-nest; and how the latter acquired a taste for this foreign commodity, is only less singular than their persevering in it.

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Among the Western nations, there is nothing equal to it, unless we except the whimsical estimation in which the Romans held some articles of luxury, remarkable for their scarcity rather than for any qualities ascribed to them.

Now, for some reason or other (I suppose the large sum he had obtained by the sale of his cargo), Prabu promised extra pay and allowances to his crew, and presented my brother and me with a couple of capital English rifles—a fit of generosity that put all on board in good spirits. But, alas! suddenly a deep gloom was cast over us by two accidents, which happened within a couple of days of each other.

One of the men having been sent with a message to a merchant, whose warehouse was situated some two or three miles along the coast, and with whom Prabu was negotiating for a return cargo, his boat was attacked by an alligator, who capsizeed it with his tail, seized its inmate, and carried him away to a hole in the bank, there to remain for some *future* meal; for the alligator never devours his food, whether it be man or beast, until it has been kept for some days. Another poor fellow had been sent upon a similar errand, but upon his return was seized and carried into the jungle by a tiger.

As, however, it may appear marvellous to my reader that *two* such tragic events should have

followed so closely upon each other, let me explain that every inlet near Singapore abounds with alligators, and every jungle with tigers. As for the latter, it seems impossible to exterminate them; for although the Government give a reward of fifty dollars, to which the merchants of the town add a like sum, for a dead tiger, and, moreover, the slayer can get a good price for its beautiful skin, and another for the flesh, which is bought by the Chinese for food, the annual deaths by these beasts reach the number of forty. Nor does there seem much hope of extirpating them; for, faster than they can be killed, others swim across the Straits of Malacca from the mainland to the island. I may here mention, as a curious fact, that the tiger was unknown in Singapore until after its occupation by the British under Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, and one from which a Buddhist, who believes in the transmigration of souls, might infer the savage brutes to be the re-embodied souls of former proprietors of the soil, seeking vengeance upon the descendants of their dispossessors.

Now, as our crew, like all the half-savage natives of the Indian islands, regarded the ferocious brutes of the forests as ruthless enemies, who should be made responsible for their deeds, rather than as creatures who merely obeyed the instinct of their natures they beseeched, nay, on their knees,

implored of the captain permission to revenge the deaths of their shipmates ; but Prabu, superior in intelligence to the majority of his race—believing that the search for a particular alligator or tiger, in a country which abounded in both, would be something like looking for a needle in a haystack, or not caring to risk the loss of live men for the sake of revenging dead ones—kindly but firmly refused ; and then, so great was his influence over the minds of these wild fellows, that, his decision once given, there was not a murmur afterwards. But then he had a capital recipe for the cure of grief—one I advise my young readers to try if ever they have a fit of the “*doldrums*.” It is the poor man’s best cure for sorrow—*work*, hard work. He employed them first in putting the vessel all taut, cleansing, repairing, and then in loading her with a fresh cargo, which consisted of casks and oblong cases of great size, filled (so Prabu told Martin and I, who were curious enough to ask the question) with silks, crapes, silver, gamboge, and other products of the Celestial Empire.

To us boys, however, there appeared some mystery about our new cargo ; for Prabu not only hesitated before he answered the question, but replied very surlily, as if vexed at being questioned. Then, again, we thought it strange that it had been packed, ready for shipment, long before

our arrival in Singapore ; but another incident happened, that added to our curiosity. Prabu had ordered the prahu to be got ready for sailing upon a certain Saturday ; but upon the Wednesday previously, after spending some hours in the town, as he and I were taking our seats in the boat to return to the vessel, he was hailed by a Dutch naval officer, just then coming ashore. Evidently annoyed, he said in a whisper—

“ Sahib, it is the captain of the Dutch cruiser, which put into the harbour yesterday.”

At once he got out of the boat and held a long conversation with the officer, but at such a distance that I could not gather a word. Now this incident was not much in itself, but then, the moment he returned to the prahu, he gave orders for the ship to be put in such a shape, that she could sail with the first wind ; and as a favourable breeze blew up that night, the anchors were lifted as gently as if the men had been afraid of awakening the fishes, and we slipped from the harbour stealthily—as if, in fact, the prahu’s character was no better than it ought to have been.

“ It’s queer work this,” said Martin to me ; “ one would almost think Prabu hadn’t paid for the cargo, and was slipping away from his creditors.”

“ No,” said I ; “ Prabu is neither pirate nor swindler.”

“ Well, then, *what* is it ?”

“My opinion is—”

“What?” Martin interposed, eagerly.

“That—that—Well, to speak plainly, I don’t know, except that it does not matter.”

“Oh, does it not, though, if we are run after and taken by that Dutchman you were telling me about! It is *my* opinion, Master Claud, that we who are sailing in the boat should know all that is going on in her.”

“Then look you, Martin, you must ask Prabu what he has in those casks and cases; for if there be any mischief brewing, the cause lies there.”

“Well,” said he, “*who’s* afraid? He can’t eat me, I suppose;” and the first time we caught Prabu alone, he put the question; but Prabu answered, as before, “China produce,” and walked surlily away.

“There, Martin,” I said, laughing, “people who don’t ask questions, don’t hear stories.”

“You may laugh, Claud,” he replied, angrily; “but it is no laughing matter. Depend upon it, mischief of some kind is brewing.”

But, notwithstanding my brother’s fears, no harm threatened for some weeks. When, however, we were in the China Sea, we fell in with a typhoon, which so knocked us about, that we were compelled to put into a port of Sumatra, in the Straits of Bangka, for repairs; and this delay very nearly cost us dearly, for it was three weeks before we could get under weigh again.

Well, we had reached within a few days' sail of the Straits of Sunda, when one morning, about day-dawn, as the heavy mists were just clearing away, we espied a ship in our wake; and about the same time she must have descried us, for she sent up a signal for us to stand to, as she was about to send an officer on board. The only answer made by Kati, who was the chief officer upon deck, was to order the crew to shoot the guns and crowd sail; but Prabu, coming up, at once countermanded the order. At that moment, a heavy ball whistled through the air over our heads.

"By jingo! the Dutchman means business," cried Martin, bobbing down his head after the ball had passed. ●

Kati looked ferocious, and laid his hand upon his creese; but Prabu, quite coolly, said, "Nay, Kati, as becomes a man of Bali, thou art brave; but it is useless now, for our heads are not of stone or rock, that they can resist such missiles; neither, thanks to the typhoon which crippled us, and to the mists which have kept us out of sight of each other, can we outrun her—so let us receive this officer on board as if we loved him. No, it will not do to fight—we must not show our teeth to our friends;" and then he gave the lieutenant some order in a whisper, and disappeared below.

"That's the identical Dutchman who hailed

Prabu as we were stepping into the sampan at Singapore," said I to Martin, as an officer and a dozen armed sailors came alongside in a boat.

"Then keep a sharp look-out, for now the mischief's brewed," replied Martin.

"*What* have you on board, from whence do you hail, and to what port are you bound?" asked the Dutch officer, as soon as he stood on deck.

"As the captain is aware (for he asked the same questions at Singapore), we have taken a cargo of nests to Singapore, and are now bound for Batavia with Chinese products," replied Prabu.

"What products?"

"Silks, silver, and provisions, Sahib Captain."

"Who are your owners?"

"The Chinese merchant Sing, of the Campong."

At this reply Martin and I opened our eyes, for we knew it to be a falsehood.

"But you have arms on board?"

"Sahib, *no*—at least not as cargo."

"Dog!" replied the captain, sternly, "these answers are false. This prahu belongs to the Pangeran of Pugar, to whom you are carrying arms." At the latter name Martin touched my shoulder. It was that of the native prince who was upon such intimate terms with Ebberfeld.

As for Prabu, at the epithet "dog," his eyes flashed, and he had a nervous twitching about the fingers, as if he longed to handle his creese; but,



taking a bundle of papers from his sarong, and presenting them to the officer, he said, in a very humble tone—

“The Captain Sahib is pleased to doubt the truth of his servant ; let him peruse these.”

Having examined the documents, the officer returned them to Prabu.

“These papers *are* correct,” said he ; “I have been misinformed ;” and he would have left the vessel quite satisfied, but for one of his men, who whispered in his ear ; when, turning again to Prabu, and pointing to some casks on deck, he asked if they contained provisions.

“Sahib, if I have not been deceived, they do,” replied Prabu, bowing, but with hesitation.

“Good,” replied the Dutchman, sharply ; “then I will buy a cask or two, for we are running short.”

“Sahib, it is not possible—they are consigned to the owner of the prahu,” cried he, with alarm ; but it was useless. At a signal from their captain, the busy sailors stove in the heads of two of the casks.

“Hillo !” cried the captain ; “they must have strong stomachs who can digest such provisions !”

Astonished at the words, my brother and I advanced to look at the contents, when, lo ! we beheld one filled with gunpowder, the other with small arms, such as bayonets, sabres, and pistols ;

and I must confess that I trembled as it occurred to me that my brother and I had been inveigled into some conspiracy, perhaps, without our knowledge.

At the sight of the weapons, the Dutch sailors placed their hands upon their pistols and cutlasses, as if they expected a sudden attack from the crew ; but no—the latter remained quite passive. As for Prabu, he affected no little astonishment at the contents of the casks.

“God is great!” he exclaimed. “Truly the Singapore merchant must have sent on board the wrong cargo, for these are not named in the bills ;” and so genuine seemed his surprise, that the captain, I believe, thought him the dupe or unwilling agent of others ; but unfortunately my brother, thinking to put in a good word or two, came forward, and, in very good Dutch, said—

“Our captain is as much astonished as yourself, sir ; he has been duped, either by the Chinese merchant of Singapore, or he of the Campong.”

“*Who* are you, my young cocksparrow, to be found chirping away in good Dutch among these piratical islanders ?” asked the captain in surprise—so much were we browned by the sun and sea-air, and so greatly did our attire, or rather want of attire, resemble our shipmates’, that without a very close examination, or hearing our voices, he could never have guessed us to be Europeans.

"Cocksparrow, sir!" replied Martin, very indignantly—"not so much a cocksparrow as you are an hungry vulture, prowling the seas to rob honest men of their cargo."

"Come, come, my little fellow" (Martin stood nearly five feet ten in height, although he looked very young in the face), "chirp out your name, and the whereabouts of your nest, that I may send you to your mother."

"Sir," said I, now interfering, hoping in my wisdom to put matters straight; "he is my brother, and a gentleman, although you see us both here with honest Prabu; we are the nephews of the rich Madame Ebberfeld, of Batavia." *That*, thought I, will convince him, at least, that we are respectable; but to my astonishment, he said—

"Nephews of Ebberfeld, *are* you? It is then as I thought." Then turning to his men, he added, "Clap these fellows under hatches; they are rebels and traitors, carrying arms to the Pangeran."

At this I certainly thought Prabu would have offered resistance, but not so: mildly and meekly, as a lamb going to the slaughter, he not only permitted himself to be put in irons, but commanded his men to submit likewise. Thus, with the exception of two (who were left to help in working the vessel), and Martin and I, they were led below. This being done, the captain returned to his boat, promising the sailors that he would,

on his return to the ship, send an officer on board.

“A pretty termination to our nest-hunting expedition, Claud!” said Martin, as, about an hour afterwards, we stood watching the approach of another boat bringing the officer.

“Yes—to be taken back to Batavia as traitors and rebels to the Dutch Government! Oh! how foolish I was to mention our connexion with Ebberfeld!”

“Aye,” replied my brother; “but never mind, old fellow—cheer up, something may turn up yet to rescue us;” but just at that moment the boat grated against the side of the prahu, and a Dutch sailor, striking us with a rattan-cane, told us to salute the officer.

“Salute that fellow—by jingo, no! Why, it is little cockatoo,” cried Martin, as he recognised the same midshipman who had overhauled our birds’-nests.

“Hush, Martin! remember we are in his power now,” said I; but the warning was useless—the consequential little fellow had overheard the words.

“Give that young pirate a couple of dozen with your rattan, Hans,” said he; “it will teach him manners.”

But, in an instant, Martin had caught up a handspike. “The first,” he cried, “who attempts

to lay hands upon me shall have this in his breast."

But open resistance was useless—worse, for it caused our petty tyrant not only to add to the number of blows, but to have my poor brother taken below and clapped in irons, to all of which I made no objection; for I knew that, while at liberty, I should have at least some chance of assisting him. I patiently bided my time, and an opportunity soon came.

Some hours after the midshipman had arrived on board, and we had passed out of sight of the war-sloop, the Dutch sailors reported to their officer that there was neither meat nor poultry—indeed, nought but rice—on board; whereupon the little worthy had Martin brought before him.

"Now, young devilskin," he began.

"Now, young cockatoo," answered Martin, impudently, and foolishly too, for it brought him a couple of stiff blows of the rattan.

"Where are the provisions stowed away?"

"Where a lubber like you can't get at them," replied my brother, more defiantly than ever; adding, as the sailor gave him another heavy blow with the rattan, "Go on, my good fellow; you and this little cockatoo shall have it all back with good interest, for I know you dare not kill me."

"You impudent vagabond!" cried the enraged

little officer, "I will have you flogged within an inch of your life."

"All right, you little coward; that wish will be quite enough to enable me to impress upon your hide a souvenir that you won't get rid of for the rest of your life."

"Will you, or will you not, tell me where the provisions are stowed away?"

"Well," replied my brother very coolly, "I will, because it will make you squeak yourself into a fit, my small friend. The provisions," he added, "with the exception of rice and water, were all thrown overboard when your rogue of a captain first came on board."

"Rascal!" again squeaked the middy, "by whose orders was it done—what for? Tell me the truth, or I will have you starved to death."

"Oh, never fear! I will tell you the truth," he replied. "Well, the provisions were sunk, that you Dutch rats might be starved out of the ship; and now you know all, what do you think of it?"

The effect of this reply upon the midshipman was comical in the extreme. He first ordered the sailor to take Martin below; then he walked about the deck, giving vent both to rage and fear—the first, that good provisions should have been thrown away—the latter, that he would have to live the rest of the voyage upon rice and water, which,

to a high-feeding Dutchman, was something like starvation.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" he cried like a child, "what shall I do? Oh! why did I ever leave Amsterdam? The captain should have left provisions on board; I will make my complaint to the Governor-General at Batavia."

Now, while he was thus soliloquizing, I was standing—watching, listening, and laughing—behind a sail; but, seeing something in the distant horizon which looked like a ship, an idea that might result in advantage to myself occurred to me; so stepping forward, and touching my cap in mock respect, I said:

"A ship in sight, sir; her captain will, perhaps, spare you some of his provisions."

"A ship in sight! Dear me, that's good news, for we may get some pork," he replied; then, having swept the horizon with his glass, he said:

"It is a Chinese junk, and she flies the Dutch flag; she must, therefore, thank God, be in the Governor-General's service: moreover, she seems at anchor among yonder islands."

Thus, the prospect of a leg of pork being nearer, assuming his usual consequential air, he said—yes, that little whipper-snapper, who did not stand above five feet three in his shoes, said to *me*, who stood nearly six feet without shoes:

"Now, you *boy*, do you think I could trust you?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" replied I, touching my cap, and with great difficulty suppressing a laugh.

"Well, well," he replied, "I believe I can, for you are not like that *other* rascal—you have a civil tongue in your head. But do you know what a pig is?"

"I believe I should know one if I saw it, without it was like the wolf in sheep's clothing."

"You rascal, are you laughing at me?"—and he shook his fist in my face.

"No, sir; shouldn't dare to laugh at an officer in command," I replied, as seriously as possible; and this mollified him, for he replied:

"Well, I don't think you would, at least not at me—it wouldn't be safe. But can you tell a good pig from a bad one?"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Well then, look you, boy; I can't spare any of my fellows, so at sundown, by which time the Chinaman will be near us, take the boat and a couple of your piratical companions, and ask the Chinese fellow for a couple of his pigs."

"Aye, aye, sir; but am I to steal them, or pay for them?"

"Why, you rogue, do you take me for a pirate? No; I will write you a requisition, which will be sufficient for the Chinese skipper; for if he shows it to the authorities at Batavia, he will be paid."

"But," said I, remembering the size of the



prahu's boats, "there is no boat that will hold them."

"Don't talk, boy ; orders are orders, and must be obeyed," replied the pompous little chief. "If they won't fit, they must be made to fit."

"The boat the pigs, or the pigs the boat?"

But all the answer he made was : "Go away, and be ready at sundown ; but remember, if you attempt any tricks, or do not return to the prahu within three hours, I will hang up that rascal brother of yours."

Well, at sundown he gave me the requisition, and, with my two men, I put off for the Chinaman. It was a terrible pull, for the boat was a small sampan. The artful little midy insisted upon our taking that, thinking that if, in defiance of his threats, we were to attempt to get further out to sea, it would be impossible. And indeed it would, for we had no rudder, and but a couple of wretched little paddles ; and as the current among the islands runs all manner of ways, as if in opposition to each other, it was as much as we could do to keep her head straight. Nay, more than once, when one of the men took his paddle out of the water, the wretched little craft spun round like a teetotum. Well, by dint of great exertions—keeping pretty straight, perhaps, for a quarter of a mile, and then being brought to a dead halt, and sent round like an horizontal

catherine-wheel, every instant expecting she would swoop down head foremost—we came alongside the junk, just as they were hanging out their night-lanterns. A pretty prospect, I thought, the return performance would be, with the addition of a couple of swine—nay, without they were sucking-pigs, the sampan would not hold them; so sucking-pigs I determined they should be, if I could manage it.

But then came another difficulty. I had no knowledge of the Chinese language. However, I knew that the Celestials at Batavia spoke what was called “pigeon Dutch”—the most extraordinary language, perhaps, ever invented. And so, calling to the men on board, I said: “One fine Dutch man wantee get top side”—which, translated, meant, “a Dutchman wanted to get upon deck;—but, to my great relief, a man answered, in pretty good Dutch, that I might come on board. So on board I went, and, telling the people on deck what I required, was at once shown into the captain or master’s cabin—if, indeed, one can dignify with such a name a mere awning supported by four bamboo-poles. However, from the centre there was suspended a couple of lanterns, beneath which, after the fatigues of the day, reclined a Chinese, but—to my horror—the very captain who had been leagued with Prabu’s intended brothers-in-law, and whom we had first deprived of his cargo and then tossed into the

sea. I had but one hope—he might not recognise me, but that soon vanished when I saw him put down his opium-pipe; for, fixing his eyes upon me, as might a panther about to spring upon its prey, he arose, and, clutching me by the arm, said:

“Rat, and son of a rat! is it possible that the rogue and thief Prabu can have sent for provisions to the man he despoiled and insulted? By the bones of my ancestors, in place of two pigs’ heads I will send him back the head of a goose!—for who but a goose would have dared to come to *me* from *him*?” And then, by way of illustrating his intention, he passed the back of his naked sword across my throat.

I had, indeed, rowed out of the frying-pan into the fire. What should I do? What *could* I do to save my life, and, worse, that of my brother?—for had not that little wretch threatened to hang him if I did not return in a given time? Suddenly, it occurred to me that flying the Dutch flag, one in that service would be held free from harm, if only from fear of the authorities at Batavia. Then I told him that I had not been sent by Prabu—in fact, the whole story of the discovery of the arms and the confinement under hatches of Prabu and his crew: but at this his conduct was very extraordinary—he raved as if he had been mad, not at Prabu, but at the Dutchman. Then, reviling all Hollanders,

and that one especially who had boarded our prahu, he invoked the name of Prabu as that of a good man—a brave man, and called down curses upon his own head for having reviled him. But at length, becoming cool, he inquired the number of the Hollanders who had possession of the prahu. When I had informed him, and also given a description of the officer in command, he said :

“My brother is young, but he is brave. Would he dare to strike a blow for the rescue of his friends?”

“If the worthy captain be sincere,” said I, “in his desire to befriend Prabu and his men, let him give me the opportunity, and he shall see.”

“It shall be as my brother wishes! May the day be fortunate!” he replied. Then, calling his first mate, he related to him the story of the Dutch officer’s discovery of the arms; and the lieutenant went almost as mad as had his captain a short time before—only, more practical than his chief, he proposed at once to man the boats and send them to the rescue.

It was then arranged between us that a pig should be put into my boat, with creeses and pistols for myself and the two men; and that another, filled with armed sailors, should follow close in our wake with muffled oars. The night was moonless, and so dark that it was not probable the latter party would be seen; but to be prepared for a

contingency, a pig was to be put into their boat also, which would be sufficient excuse for its appearance in company with mine.

Well, in about an hour we started—I being not a little proud at having the command of an expedition for the rescue of my brother and friends; and we reached the prahu without any accident, excepting that piggy having burst his bonds, I had considerable difficulty in holding him quiet in the boat.

Having directed my two men to hide under the raised stern until they heard the report of a pistol, I hailed the people upon deck. The little midshipman, being very hungry and anxious for his pork, was the first to answer by commanding me to bring the pig on board.

“It is a Chinese pig, and as big as a rhinoceros,” said I. “We want help—throw out a rope.”

Having secured this rope, not only round the animal, but also round the sampan, so that the great weight would afford an excuse for the aid of several men, I left one in the boat, and with the other went upon deck.

“The animal is large and heavy, sir,” said I to the officer—“it will require at least three people to man the rope;” and the greedy little midshipman was so delighted at having secured so fine a pig, that he ordered four of his Dutch sailors to my assistance.

Well, away they went to work—tug, tug! Of course, there never was so heavy a pig. Then suddenly, as I had arranged with the man below, the rope snapped in two, and the men upon deck fell backwards. I fired my pistol, and closed with one; the man who had ascended with me took another, and he in the boat was up the side like a wild cat upon a third; and before they had time to recover from their surprise, the Chinese, springing from the other boat into the prahu, came to our assistance, and I believe not one life would have been saved—for the Chinese, with their four thousand years of civilization, are by far more bloodthirsty and cruel than the wild islanders of the Archipelago—had I not begged hard of them to stay their hands, at least till our friends should be released, and so be enabled to share in the vengeance upon the Dutchmen. So, leaving the prisoners in charge of the Celestials, I and my two men unfastened the hatches.

“God is great!” was the only expression of Prabu at his unexpected release.

“Claud, old fellow, how did all this come about?” said my brother.

“Not a word—not a word!” I answered, “until we have rescued the throats of the Dutchmen from our Celestial friends.”

“The sahib is right—not a drop of blood must be shed,” replied Prabu. Nor was another word

spoken until we had taken our late masters from their dangerous position, and placed them under hatches.

But what had become of our late redoubtable commander? The length and breadth of the deck, the rigging was searched, but he was not to be found—at least until Martin, seeing the top of the brine-tub move, exclaimed, “I smell a rat!” Then lifting the lid, all but the imperturbable Prabu became convulsed with laughter; for, crouching down, buried up to the shoulders in brine, with pale face and chattering teeth, was the officer of the Dutch navy.

“Why, our little cockatoo is trying to preserve himself by pickling!” cried Martin: then, looking very ferocious, he added, “But he is not scalded yet—bring hither the hog-tub and boiling water.”

“Oh! pray, good young gentleman,” cried the little fellow, in great terror, “do not put me to so horrible a death; hang, shoot me, or anything else!”

“You wretched coward, come out, or you will die of fright, and rob us of the satisfaction of killing you,” cried Martin, helping him out of the tub.

Having thus recaptured the prahu, it became a difficulty to know what to do with our prisoners. Our Chinese allies very coolly proposed cutting off their heads, “for,” said they, “men without heads

can't make mischief." When, however, these gentle advisers had quitted us, we put them ashore upon one of the islands, leaving with them a supply of pork, rice, and water.

Having thus got rid of the Dutchmen, and bent sail for Bali, upon the eastern extremity of Java, I told the story in detail of my recapture of the prahu. Prabu was very grateful, for I had saved him a very valuable cargo as well as vessel. Martin was delighted, calling it jolly fun, and regretted only that he had not been with me ; but, observing that I looked gloomily, he said :

" Why, Claud, here are you—who have done a thing so monstrously plucky, that in the navy it would have earned you promotion—looking as glum as if you had lost, not gained, a ship."

" Ah ! Martin, that ' in the navy ' makes all the difference ; but, you see, if the Governor-General of Batavia catches me, the kind of promotion I shall get may be hanging. Yes," I continued, looking angrily towards Prabu, " while we have been sailing about under the belief that we were simply honest nest-gatherers and traders, we have been pirates, rebels, or something of that kind, without knowing it."

" Oh, bother !" exclaimed Martin, very seriously, —" that's true, but I never thought of it. Prabu, old fellow, you have brought us into a pretty scrape with your firearms and your pangerans ;



so the least you can do is to let us know what is likely to be the end of it. No secrets any longer, if you please."

"The young sahibs sought their servant, and begged he would take them with him," replied Prabu.

"Ay, that's true enough," cried Martin; "but we didn't think we were taking service with a grim old pirate, you know!"

"Prabu is no pirate; moreover, he would sacrifice his own life rather than any harm should come to the young sahibs."

"Oh! that is all very well, and I believe it," answered Martin; "still, you should have told us what we had to expect, not kept us in the dark so long."

"Sahib Martin," he replied, earnestly, "you are right; I might well have intrusted both with my secret, for you are brave as lions; but, thanks to Allah! it is not too late to make amends. Let them listen."

Then he confessed, what we surmised from the words of the Dutch captain—namely, that he had been acting as agent for the Pangeran of Pugar, collecting and selling his birds'-nests, and purchasing arms with the money.

"Then," said I, "there is a conspiracy afoot, and the native princes are about to rise against their masters the Dutch."

“Masters!” he exclaimed, scornfully—“the dogs of Dutch—the treacherous Hollanders—thieves and plunderers of the East—fellows whose souls are in their money-bags—the *masters* of the descendants of the Susunans!” Then, as if bethinking his haste had betrayed him into imprudence, he added, “But who is Prabu, that he should prate of the affairs of princes? Sahib,” he continued, “you will not betray me. Know, then, that in every island of the archipelago, the people are but biding their opportunity to throw off the accursed yoke.”

“But, Prabu,” I asked, quite innocently, “why do *you* dislike the Hollanders?”

“Dislike!” he exclaimed; “I hate them!—yes, with the hereditary accumulated hatred of generations; nor is it alone so with us islanders. Has not the Sahib Claud told us how readily even the Chinese captain forgot his hatred to me, for depriving him of his cargo of nests, when hearing that I and the arms were beneath the claws of these Dutch wolves? But,” he added, “the sun is sinking; another day I will tell the sahibs the history of the cruel doings of these Dutch in Java, and they shall then judge whether our hatred to them is groundless or not.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

### HISTORY OF OUR CAPTAIN : HIS HATRED OF THE DUTCH.

THE next day, as my brother and I were reclining beneath the deck-awning, Prabu related the following history :—

“I have told the sahibs how greatly I venerate the memory of the Counsellor Black, their uncle : as Allah knows, it is with reason. When a little slave-boy, he bought me from a harsh, cruel master, and being pleased with my grateful behaviour, and considering I possessed talents, caused me to be educated for a clerk—that is, had me taught the Dutch and English languages. More, he would have given me my freedom, but feared the jealousy of his fellow-rulers, to whom it was known that I was the descendant of a prince, and one, too, once the direst and most hated foe of their countrymen.”

“You, Prabu, descended from a prince !—a real rightdown royal highness ?” asked Martin.

“Have patience, sahib,” he replied; “for to the history of that noble man I shall soon come. In the Dutch books,” he continued, “I read the story of the great deeds done by the Hollanders when they fought to throw off the tyranny of Philip, King of Spain, and how that, by virtue and bravery, from a nation of slaves they became a free people: for this I could have loved them. But in other books, I read that in the East—except in China and Japan, where, for the sake of gold, they behaved as truculent slaves—they have been tyrants, more hateful and cruel than him whose yoke they overthrew; and I first asked myself, whether God had placed hearts in the breasts of Dutchmen, and then hated them. The latter was for deeds done to me and mine; but the sahibs shall judge for themselves.

“When the first Dutchmen, under one Houtman, found their way to the Archipelago, in the year 1595 of the Christian Era, the island of Java was divided into several kingdoms—Cheribon, Martaram, Bantam, and Jacatra. It was not until thirty years after the arrival of these locusts, that the supreme rule was held chiefly by a great Susunan of the House of Martaram. Upon their coming, they were received by the Javans and other islanders with open arms; but these Dutch, ay, and the Portuguese and English, who were already established in the Archipelago, and almost as bad,

must have been the scum of their own countries ; for, taking advantage of the simplicity of the people, they cheated and robbed them at every opportunity—nay, behaved like demons, who considered all less cunning than themselves as birds and beasts of the forest—lawful prey.

“ Thus, even the first fleet of these adventurers made war upon Bantam and Saduya, and at Madura murdered the king and his family, while they were paying them a friendly visit on board the fleet. Surely such arts should have opened the eyes of the native princes to the real character of their visitors, and have caused them to prevent the coming of others!—but not so. Fresh fleets, invited by the gains of their countrymen, came ; and, by making great professions of amity and moderation, were permitted to establish themselves in the kingdom of Jacatra. In gratitude for this concession, the pirates arose against the prince, subdued his kingdom, and built Batavia upon the site of his capital. Having obtained a firm footing in the land, they commenced a series of intrigues, setting the native princes one against the other, occasionally aiding each, but keeping faith with neither. Thus they gradually became virtually masters of the country, although many of the native princes were permitted to hold their rank and titles. Among these was the great Susunan Mangkorat, whom they had helped to the throne

against his younger brother. During this reign happened what the Dutch call the *rebellion of Surapati*.

“That Surapati, sahibs, was my ancestor, and is a name held holy in the memory of every true-blooded islander.”

“Was he the born prince, then, of whom you told us?” asked Martin.

“Not so, sahib—not born a prince; far nobler, a self-made one.”

“A successful rebel, then,” said my brother; but, not noting this, Prabu continued:—

“Surapati, when a child of seven years of age, was brought from Bali among the crowd of slaves who were annually taken into Batavia by the Dutch, whose ruin would have been brought about by their own tyranny, had there been six other such men in the island. Well, Surapati was bought by a Dutchman of the name of Hesse, for whom he toiled, and was well treated, till, forgetting that he was a slave, he dared to fall in love with his master’s daughter—a crime so heinous in the eyes of the Hollanders, that, upon detection, the slave was severely flogged, and ordered to be placed in the public stocks, where, with sixty of his countrymen, he had to endure the scoffs and personal insults of Europeans; but, sahibs, the stocks could not prevent his brain from thinking, nor his heart from beating. Thus the wood that

galled his limbs kindled in his breast a hatred that, to his last day, never became quenched, and which, dying, he bequeathed to his descendants, in whose hearts it burns, even now, as fiercely as ever.

“Well, one night, after weeks of confinement, Surapati succeeded in releasing himself and countrymen, and, having slain the Dutch sentinels, they fled to the mountains near Batavia, upon which town, from time to time, the band made such fierce raids that it became the terror of the inhabitants, who began to put the city in a state of defence, and armed themselves to their very teeth. Surapati now, finding the place too strong and well prepared, led his small band eastward, ay, to the very capital of the Susunan in Casard. Ever bold and fearless, he one day alone entered the palace of the Susunan, and dared to shame the monarch upon his throne for his great amity with the rapacious foreigners, whose puppet he had become. And the Susunan—who, although he feared the power of the Dutch, at heart was disgusted at the thralldom in which they had placed him—agreed to give secret aid and countenance to any design that Surapati and his patriot band might form against them.

“When the Hollanders discovered in whose dominions their now terrible enemy was hiding, they sent an ambassador, demanding that he

should be given up to them ; but the Susunan evaded the request, upon the plea of respecting the laws of hospitality : at the same time, however, he told them they might search any or every part of his dominions. Having obtained this concession, the Dutch, to capture this little band, sent one thousand men, in addition to those they had already in the Susunan's dominions. So great a force would have compelled Surapati to flee, but, then, his patriotic designs against the hated Hollanders had obtained for him the friendship of the prime minister, who not only gave him his daughter in marriage, but, with the permission of his royal master, espoused his son-in-law's cause.

“Thus, at the head of a comparatively small force, Surapati met the foreigners in the field successfully, defeating and killing them to a man. After this victory, Surapati retired still further eastward, and, seizing upon several provinces, established an independent kingdom, which, for twenty years, was happy and prosperous under his rule ; although, during all that period, he never lost an opportunity of meeting and harassing the enemy. Sahibs, had he lived a few more years, that great man would have hunted the pirates from the island ; and in that very attempt he died, for although conquering place after place, he never lost one, and at length fell in battle with the Dutch.”



“ Well, Prabu,” said Martin, “ he *was* a plucky fellow, and deserved all he got but his death.”

“ Ay,” said I, “ and deserved a monument to his memory.”

“ His monument is the hatred in the hearts of his countrymen—a hatred never to be appeased, if only in memory of the dastardly treatment of his corpse,” replied Prabu. “ For a long time after the battle,” he added, “ the Dutch were sorely grieved, for they could not find the body of the hero : they were afraid that the soul would re-inhabit it, and bring back their enemy—so they offered a large reward for its discovery. The reward was tempting to some degenerate Javans, for, forgetting their lord, they showed the Dutch chief the grave ; but it was level—no one could discern a tomb. The body was, however, dug for and found. It was still entire as when alive, and shed a perfume like a flower-garden. The Hollanders bore it away to their camp, and, placing it in a sitting posture in a chair, the officers took the corpse by the hand, saluting it according to the custom of their country, and tauntingly exclaiming, ‘ This is the hero Surapati, the mighty warrior, the enemy of the Dutch ! ’ After this they threw the body into a great fire and burned it to ashes. For this,” concluded Prabu, in a greatly excited state, “ do I hate the Dutch ; and for thousands of acts, still worse, do my countrymen abhor them ! ”

“And I do not wonder,” said I; “but why should the Chinese, foreigners like themselves, and equally as money-loving, share in that hatred?”

“For numberless deeds of cruelty and oppression, and not the least the great and cold-blooded massacre of their countrymen in 1740, when in Batavia alone, on that one occasion, more than ten thousand were slain.”

“But surely, Prabu, the brutes must have made some *show* of an excuse for such butchery!”

“Yes—that the Celestials were meditating a conspiracy to drive them from Java; but the truth was, that the Chinese had flocked into Batavia to a number that alarmed the Dutch. Jealous also of their intelligence and wealth, they goaded the Celestials by excessive taxation, arbitrary punishments, and frightful executions, until the latter could bear no more, and threatened to rise in rebellion. This was sufficient for the European rulers, who commenced a system of persecution; still, it was not until 1740 that the revolt commenced.

“The crisis was brought about by the forcible seizure of a number of Chinese, and their deportation to Ceylon, under pretext of their being engaged in committing irregularities in the neighbourhood of Batavia. Exasperated by this tyranny, the Chinese in the vicinity of the city, who were not restrained by the presence of a military force,

committed acts of violence, excess, and cruelty. Taking advantage of this, the Dutch promulgated a story of a *wicked* and *long-meditated* conspiracy, to destroy the European authorities. Between the Dutch troops and the armed mob of Chinese in the environs, several indecisive actions took place. On the 7th day of October, it was discovered that the Chinese quarter of the town was on fire. This was construed into an artifice to mask an attempt to murder the European inhabitants in the confusion of the conflagration.

“The habitual timidity of the Dutch colonists took alarm; the massacre of the Chinese inhabitants of Batavia forthwith commenced, and was in a few hours formally authorised by an order of the Government, which directed that none but the women and children should be spared. A band of brutal sailors was landed from the fleet in the roads, to carry this order into effect; the doors of the Chinese houses were burst open, and the inhabitants dragged out and massacred, without offering the smallest resistance. The city was in a state of conflagration, and nothing was to be seen throughout but fire, murder, and rapine—victims and executioners; it was not until the twenty-second of the same month that an armistice was proclaimed. The effects of this abominable tyranny were felt from one extremity of Java to the other: the Chinese who escaped the slaughter

marched to the east, and leagued themselves with the Susunan, who were very willing to be rid of their common oppressors ; and a series of revolts, wars, or rebellions was the consequence, which continued, for a period of fifteen years, to desolate the fairest portions of the island, and to exhaust its resources.”

## CHAPTER XV.

### ADVENTURES WITH A BIG SNAKE AND A MAN-EATER.

WHEN, after a three weeks' run along the coast, we arrived at the mouth of the River Progo—which, rising in the mountains of Kadu, in the interior of Java, empties itself into the sea at Martaram—we found it necessary to ship fresh water; and for that purpose three men, with a sampan and several empty casks, were ordered by Prabu to proceed up the stream. Then my brother and I were positively suffering for want of animal food. I say my brother and I, because the only provisions the natives cared about were rice, fish, and water; nay, so abstemious are these people, that it is a common boast among them that when *necessary*, as in the case of troops in the field, they can live upon the leaves of trees alone. Thus it was that, when Martin found the sampan crew were going up the river, he said:

“Claud, old fellow, we shall get as thin as weasels if we don't soon get something better

than rice and fish to live upon. What say you to going with these fellows, and trying our rifles among the game in the interior, or at least along the banks?"

"Nothing I should like better. I will persuade Prabu to give us permission," but the latter required no persuasion; for not only did he give us leave, but a sampan to ourselves, and Kati, who had been a mighty hunter in his native isle, for our guide and Mentor.

Taking advantage of this, in an hour or two we were pulling up the river to get beyond the tide; which by the way, being at the flood, much lessened our labour, for, merely resting upon our oars, we were swept rapidly up the stream without any exertion of our own.

When we arrived at the spot where the water was to be obtained, we told the crew of the other sampan to fill their casks and return to the prahu without waiting for us; then, by Kati's advice, we proceeded up the river, until we had reached within, as he believed, a few leagues of the ancient city of Yugyacarta. Here we landed, and, having secured our boat to the trunk of one of the thousand mangrove-trees along the banks, advanced into the jungle, preceded by Kati, who beat the path for us; but, as we left the river further and further in our rear, I began to have some misgivings as to our safety.

"Suppose," I said, "we should beat up a tiger, Martin?"

"Well," he replied quite coolly, "suppose we do, we shall have to shoot the fellow, that's all!"

"Hilloa! what have we here?" he exclaimed, discharging his rifle into a flock of some thirty or forty birds, which rose and flew through the foliage of the trees. Looking up, my eyes were dazzled by the wonderful effect of the sun upon their plumage: never had I seen so beautiful a sight.

"Sahib, they are God's birds," said Kati.

"God's birds!" I repeated, picking up two that had fallen. "They are birds of paradise, Martin."

"Birds of paradise!" he repeated, examining the wondrous beauty of their plumage. "What a pity I have killed them! However, it can't be helped—we must keep them for specimens. But I wonder how they came here. I have always heard that they are only to be found in Papua and the Moluccas."

"Have got away, sahib, from some prahu wrecked upon the coast."

"More likely they have escaped from the aviary of some native prince. But," said I, as we walked on, "do you remember the queer stories we used to read at school about these beautiful creatures, Martin?"

"No."

“ Well then—how that they puzzled all the learned, who declared that they were inhabitants of air, living upon the dews of heaven, and never resting below ? ”

“ Well, Claud, there was good reason for the supposition ; for I do recollect having read that all the earlier specimens brought to Europe were without feet.”

“ Aye, but that originated with the natives of the Moluccas, who, although savages, were very cunning. For instance, describing the great admiration Europeans had for the beauty of their plumage, and knowing the high prices they would pay for them, before bringing the birds to market they cut off their feet—which, as you see, are ugly, and their *only* deformity. One deceit led to another. The purchaser, finding the birds without legs, naturally enquired after those members, and the seller, as naturally, began to assert that they had none. Thus far the European was imposed upon by others—in all the rest he imposed upon himself. Seeing so beautiful a bird without legs, he concluded that it could live only in air, where legs were unnecessary. The extraordinary splendour of its plumage assisted this deception ; and as it had heavenly beauty, so it was asserted to have a heavenly residence ; hence its name, and all the false reports that have been propagated concerning it.”



“ But how do the natives catch them ? ” asked Martin.

“ By concealing themselves in the trees where they resort ; and having covered themselves up from sight in a bower made of the branches, they shoot at the birds with arrows made of reeds ; and, as they assert, if they happen to kill their king, they then have a good chance of killing the greatest part of the flock. The chief mark by which they know the king is by the end of the feathers in his tail, which have eyes like those of a peacock. When they have taken a number of these birds, their usual method is to gut them and cut off their legs ; they then run a hot iron into the body, which dries up the internal moisture, and, filling the cavity with salt and spices, they sell them to Europeans.”

“ Stay—listen, Claud ; there is some great beast near,” cried my brother, interrupting me, and at the same time bringing his rifle to the “ present.”

I trembled, but followed his example, keeping my finger upon the trigger ; nearly a hundred yards before us—(we were just then ourselves in a cleared space amongst tall grass)—the rattans in the jungle bent and crackled, and soon the head of the new-comer presented itself.

“ Big pig, sahib ; don’t both shoot at once,” cried Kati, drawing his creese.

“ Martin,” I said, “ be wary and cool ; aim be-

tween the eyes, and I will reserve my fire in case you miss."

On came piggy, not with a run, but at a gentle ambling pace, coolly and defiantly looking us in the face—so gently, indeed, that with patience we might have bagged him ; but before he advanced more than a dozen yards, my impulsive brother fired, exclaiming, "There's a dead pig for you !"

But not so : the bullet, passing through his neck, did but arouse the animal, making it change its trot into a charge.

"Load quickly, Martin," cried I, at the same time sending a bullet that hit the pig in the forehead, and sent him over snorting, grunting, and fruitlessly endeavouring to get upon his legs again.

"Bravo, Claud—a capital shot ! but now let us put the poor brute out of his misery."

"No sahib—not hurry," cried Kati ; "pig gore you with his tusks—he only sham being so bad he can't stand." And with his *sarong*—which he had taken off and bound tightly round his left arm—and creese in hand, he ran towards the animal ; but when within a couple of yards of it, he suddenly came to a dead halt, and there stood as if terror-stricken. But so were we, for we saw rise from amongst the tall grass to the height of a man, a huge *liboya* (a species of boa-constrictor common to Java) ; and there for a moment it remained,

putting forth its forked tongue, and glaring at pig and man, as if undecided upon which to spring. A grunt or cry of terror, however, from the former settled the matter, for the reptile instantly fell upon the pig and began to twine itself around him, crushing his bones.

“There goes a month’s rations for the whole crew,” said Martin.

“Not if I can help it ;” and taking a good aim I fired, but, missing the head, the bullet passed through its neck. The huge reptile now uncoiled itself from the pig, and began to strike his tail around with the rapidity and power of a scythe mowing grass by steam—sending the mud, sand, and dirt about in showers.

“Sahibs, go not near snake, but fire again ; while I go and get rope from sampan.”

“What on earth does he want with the rope ?” said Martin. But Kati had disappeared, and I was too much engaged to reply, for I was reloading my rifle. That being done, I again fired and hit the serpent. This shot, however, only excited its fury the more and caused it to raise such a whirlwind of dust and mud, that, to avoid being blinded, we were compelled to retreat some distance.

“Now,” said Martin, when the reptile had become quiet, and the dust allayed ; “let us send a volley.”

This we did, and effectively, for both bullets passed through its head.

“Bravo, Claud! we have saved our bacon—or pork; the snake is dead,” cried Martin, advancing towards the carcass of the pig.

“Not so—if you value your life, remain where you are,” I replied; for I saw that the reptile, notwithstanding its mortal wounds, was writhing and twisting about in such a manner as to be dangerous for any person to approach it. Kati, however, who now came running up to us, carrying a rope with a noose at one end, had no such fears. Going within a few yards, and handling it as dexterously as an American of the prairies would a lasso, he by one throw sent it over the head.

“Now sahibs, pull tight—choke snake, and we draw him to sampan.”

“What for?” asked Martin, in astonishment. “It is the pig we want in the sampan, not this brute of a snake.”

“Sahib, yes—he not dead yet—we fasten rope to sampan—then drag him ’bout till no more ’live.”

“But that’s no answer,” replied Martin; “let him die here. What do we want with it on board the boat? Let’s take the pig.”

“Come, come, Martin,” I said, “let us humour Kati; he is a native, and understands what he is about.”

“Well, let us secure the pig first, and I will

help you," he replied, proud of his first game, and fearing to be robbed by some wild beast.

We complied, and by our united efforts hauled the snake to the river's edge ; then, fastening the rope to the stern, we got into the boat and dragged the reptile, still alive and swimming about in the water like an eel, up to the other sampan, the crew of which, having filled their casks, were about departing. At a word, however, from Kati, one of the men, taking the end of the rope that had been fastened to our sampan, ascended a tree till he reached a forked branch ; throwing it over this, he let one end down to his comrades, who then hauled up the snake—some twenty feet in length, and as thick as the body of a boy twelve years of age. Then the man upon the branch, placing a sharp knife between his teeth, began to descend, holding on to the slimy body by means of his legs and one hand, ripping it up and skinning it as he came slowly down. By the time he came to the ground again, he had no pleasant appearance, his mahogany-coloured skin being all besmeared with the reptile's blood. But the result was worth the pains taken to procure it, for in a very short time the natives had emptied one of the casks and re-filled it with the fat, or rather oil—a commodity so marketable that it proved a valuable gift to Prabu.

Having thus shipped our prizes and despatched

them to the prahu, we pulled back in the direction of our hunting-ground, with the intention of looking after other game ; for one pig, we knew, would be but a sorry store for the long voyage before us.

“ I wish we could just bag a few of those Argus pheasants we used to have at Mynheer’s,” said Martin.

“ About as probable as to find the golden pheasant of China !” replied I. Why, the Argus pheasant is only found in Sumatra. (*Apropos* of the common pheasant, my young reader is not perhaps aware, that its progenitors were first brought to Europe from the banks of the Pharsis, a river of Colchis, in Asia Minor, and from which they derive their name.) “ Besides,” I added, “ it would be barbarous indeed to slaughter so beautiful a bird with a rifle-bullet. What would they think of such unsportsmanlike conduct in England ?”

“ Oh ! bother about what they think in England, Claud, when we are dying for want of fresh provisions ; still, I admire their beauty as much as you.”

“ Aye, brother, just now you would think one very beautiful, especially with bread-sauce.”

“ Never mind, Claud ; if I can only get sight of one, we will have him, and dressed too, before we return to the prahu ; nevertheless, they *are* pretty

birds. Don't you remember darling old Goldsmith's anecdote about their beautiful plumage?"

"Repeat it, Martin, and it will turn you from your barbarous design."

"Well then, after telling us that 'next to the peacock the pheasant is the most beautiful of birds, as well for the nice colour of their plumes as for their happy mixtures and variety,' he says that Croesus, King of Lydia, being seated upon the throne, adorned with royal magnificence and all the barbaric pomp of Eastern splendour, asked Solon, if he had ever beheld anything so fine? The Greek philosopher, no way moved by the objects before him, or taking a pride in his native simplicity, replied that, after having seen the beautiful plumage of the pheasant, he could be astonished at no other finery.

"There, Claud, you have the anecdote; but what does it prove? Not that Solon did not like them with bread-sauce, but that the old Greek, having a reputation for wisdom, wanted to sustain it by saying a clever thing, or that, in his heart, he looked upon the king's riches and splendour as the fox did at the grapes—'they were so much beyond his reach that they must be sour.' But hiloah, Kati! what's a-do now?" he said, as he saw our companion take off his sarong, and bind it tightly round his left arm.

"Hush!" replied the latter, placing his finger upon

his lips, and pointing to a small boat, rowed by a single inmate, that had just rounded a bend of the river and was approaching us.

"Well, what matters? He is only one and we are three," replied Martin, thinking Kati regarded the boatman as some suspicious personage; but when the latter, pointing in the wake of the boat, whispered the word "man-eater," he trembled indeed, and so did I; for we could now see the long scales, dark hideous body, and snout of a huge crocodile. The man, too, evidently knew his danger, for he was pulling with might and main to outrun the reptile, knowing that if it once got so far ahead that it could get its tail beneath the boat, he would himself soon fill its jaws.

"What shall we do—what *can* we do—to help the poor fellow?" I cried.

"Wait till its snout gets a little higher above water, and then send a bullet into him," said Martin.

"No, no, sahib—not good; man-eater not care for that—his scales like one wall."

"Well, what then, Kati? I will not sit here and see a human being quietly fall into the jaws of a brute like that, if I can help it."

"Me help it, sahib; me kill man-eater almost before grow to one man."

But now our attention became fixed with terrible interest upon the scene before us: the boatman,



panting, exerted himself to his utmost, the reptile still following, and evidently gaining upon the boat.

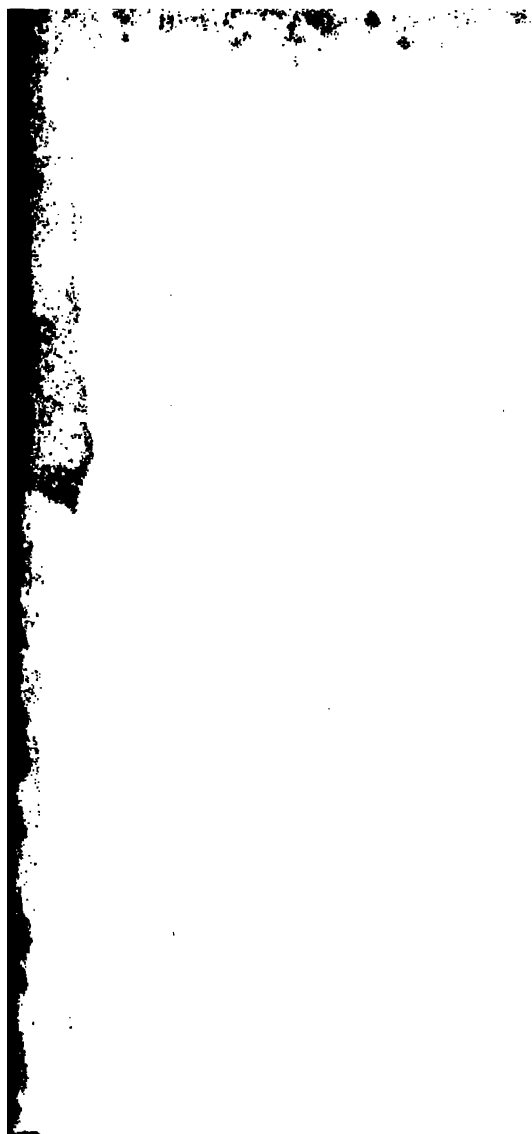
“I should like to put a bit of this salt upon his tail,” said Martin, fingering the lock of his rifle.”

“No, no, not good send bullet—may want it if me not kill him,” replied Kati.

“Yes, let us reserve our charges,” said I; but the next instant the crocodile had passed under the boat; there was a wild moan, and man and sampan were some yards in the air; but as soon, almost, as they had again touched the water, Kati, who had leaped from our boat, and was between the boatman and the reptile, the latter—apparently astonished that a man should be swimming boldly *towards* instead of *from* him—rested for an instant. That instant, however, was enough for the brave Kati to compose himself for the coming struggle. We kept our fingers on the triggers, and our rifles in such a position that, should the monster obtain the least advantage over its antagonists, we might send a bullet into its eye, or, if such a fortunate opportunity presented itself, its belly—for, you see, the scales are bullet-proof. Suddenly, the brute opened its huge jaws, a thrill of horror passed through our frames, and on the instant I should have fired but for Martin, who exclaimed—



A NOVEL DUEL



“Great Heaven! Kati has thrust his arm down the brute’s throat!” and so he had, and immediately afterwards the surface of the water became tinged with black-red blood.

By opening his jaws, the reptile had given his enemy an opportunity, for at once Kati thrust in one arm up to the shoulder, while with the other he had stabbed it in the throat with his creese; and by repeating these blows rapidly, at the same time that the water entered the mouth, the body had swollen to the size of a large tub, and in a few minutes more the eater of men was dead and harmless, and Kati was ashore receiving our congratulations.

The delight of the native whose life had been so miraculously saved was almost frantic: he fell down before Kati, kissed his feet, and clasped his knees; but upon the body of the crocodile—which, when it had floated near the bank, we dragged ashore—he vented the most childish spite, stamping upon it with his feet, calling it the most horrible names, and stabbing it in the belly.

Truly, it was hideous to look upon—by far worse than when in the water. It was a large double-crested crocodile, of the species common to the rivers of Java, being, from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail, twenty-five feet in length.

I may here remark, that although the feat performed by Kati seemed to us at that time

very wonderful, it is one not at all uncommon among the wild tribes of the East; also, that there are many methods of taking the crocodile. For instance, in Siam, in the rivers of which these reptiles swarm, the hunters throw three or four strong nets across a river, at proper distances from each other, so that if the animal breaks through the first it may be caught by one of the others. When first taken it lashes its tail in all directions in its endeavour to escape, but by so doing exhausts its strength; then the natives approach their prisoner in boats, and pierce him with their weapons till it is weakened by loss of blood; they then tie up its mouth, and with the same cord fasten the head to the tail, bending the back like a bow. The animal thus taken is not killed, but brought into subjection by the slaves of Siamese noblemen, who keep them in small lakes in the grounds of their homes for their amusement, and who, it is said, so far tame the reptiles that they can bridle and ride them like horses.

## CHAPTER XVI.

WE PICK UP A CHINESE STORY-TELLER, WHO SENDS  
US TO SLEEP.

WHEN our new acquaintance had exhausted his expressions of gratitude to Kati, and gratified his spite upon the body of the dead reptile, he told us that he was a servant of the Chief of Yugyacarta, who had sent him to the coast with a message to the captain of a Chinese junk. At this information, Kati's eyes became lighted up with pleasure.

"Truly," said he, "this is fortunate; for it is to that great chief thy servant is now proceeding, on a mission from his captain. Will my brother," he added, "cut short his journey, and lead his servant to the great man, for after quitting the river, the road to the town is long and intricate?"

"Is it possible, under heaven, that a man who has been saved from the jaws of a man-eater can deny aught to his preserver?"

"Hilloah, Kati!" asked the curious Martin, "what

business can you have with the Chief of Yugyacarta?"

"My *master's* business, oh sahib, and therefore to be disclosed only at his command," was the quiet reply.

"You are well answered, Mr. Curious," said I; "but, Kati, how long will you be absent? Shall we await your return?"

"Let the sahibs remain until the buffalo returns to his pasture (sundown), and their servant will be grateful; but let them not wait after the sun has gone, for the captain will be in fear that misfortune has overtaken them."

So saying, Kati and the stranger entered the latter's boat and pulled up the stream.

"Bother!" exclaimed Martin, "upon what errand is that fellow going to the chief? More mystery—I don't like it."

"Nonsense, Martin; there is *no* mystery that Prabu will not explain when we return on board. As for Kati, you cannot blame him for being faithful to his master; but now let us beat the jungle for a week's rations."

"Well, old fellow, perhaps, after all, you are right, so let us lose no more time," he replied.

Then, having secured the sampan to the stump of a tree, we shouldered our rifles, and soon entered the forest. For several hours we wandered stealthily, for fear of tigers, among huge

trees, luxuriant palms, and the teak (the oak of Java, the only island of the Archipelago in which it abounds).

The teak, like the oak, takes from eighty to a hundred years to reach maturity, rising then to a height of eighty or a hundred feet, and having a girth of from five to eight feet. Anent this monarch of the Indian forest and "the brave old oak," Crawford writes, "It is singular, that among the innumerable varieties of woods which exist in both worlds, from the Arctic Circle to the Equator, two only—the oak and the teak—should, by their strength, durability, and abundance, be fit for the higher purposes of the arts, domestic and naval architecture, and the fabrication of great machinery. The geographical distribution of the oak has a wider limit than the teak. It exists in Europe, Asia, and America, to within ten degrees of the Tropics. The teak exists in Asia only, in the countries lying between China and Persia, within the Tropics—being found but in the southern peninsula of India, in India beyond the Ganges to the confines of China, and in the island of Java.

"In comparing the qualities of the two woods, those of the teak will be found considerably to preponderate. It is equally strong as the oak, and somewhat more buoyant; its durability is more uniform and decided; and to insure that dura-



bility, it demands less care and preparation, for it may be put in use almost green from the forest, without danger of dry or wet rot. It is fit to endure all climates and alternations of climate; the oak, on the contrary, cracks and is destroyed by such alternations, and particularly by exposure to the rays of a tropical sun. The oak contains an acid, which corrodes and destroys iron; the teak not only has no such acid, but even contains an essential oil, which tends to preserve iron. The great superiority of the oak over the teak consists in its utility in the fabrication of vessels for holding liquids. The strong odour which the teak imparts to all liquids which are solvents of the essential oil in which that odour is contained, makes it unfit to be used for holding them. It makes good water-casks, but is unfit for wine, or any spirit but arrack, to which it imparts some of that peculiar flavour which some persons affect to relish. Another noteworthy forest tree is the *nipah*, or atap palm, whose leaves afford the natives thatching for their house-roofs and matting for their floors, and from the sap of which is extracted a drinkable wine."

Then we had to beat through bushes of the prickly rattan-cane, so well known to my readers, but used in the Archipelago for ligature and cordage, and possessing a fruit of the size of a pullet's egg. Then through little forests of the

bamboo, whose uses are so numerous that they may be mentioned as commencing with the cradle, and ending with the grave; for it helps to form the first and yields the material for the last human garment.

Well, near sundown, or, as a Javanese would say, "the hour when the buffalo is brought back from the pastures," we returned to the sampan with a tolerably successful bag of game—namely, a young fawn and a dozen birds, chiefly partridges and a species of wood-pigeon.

"Not bad sport, Martin," said I, as we tossed the game into the boat.

"No—and the sooner we reach the prahu now the better; for in another hour or so, when the beasts of the forest come down to the river to take their evening draught, the crocodiles will be out in swarms."

"Shall we wait no longer for Kati?"

"No—it would be useless," replied Martin. "But, hilloah!" he exclaimed, "who have we here?"

"A footsore traveller, Martin—that you can easily see by his limp," said I; but the next minute the stranger, who was a Chinese, and, from his broken Dutch, I thought, of the poorer class of the traders of the Campong, cried:

"For the love of Fo, and their own God, let not the noble youths put off their sampan, till

they have heard the sad story of the wretched Si-Ling!"

"I don't like these Chinese fellows. Shall we push off?" said my brother.

"For shame, Martin! Let us at least hear what he has to say."

At which the Chinese, taking courage, said:

"Know then, oh noble youth, that thy servant, the miserable and insignificant Si-Ling, two moons since left Batavia to go to Yugyacarta, where he has since lived with his wife and two children; but, alas! the jungle-fever seized and carried his whole family to the yellow stream (*i.e.*, they had died by fever) three days since. Overcome with grief, thy servant started this morning at daybreak in a sampan to reach the coast, where he hoped to find some junk or prahu, whose noble captain would take him back to Batavia; but, alas! thy slave chose an unfortunate day, for when within two leagues of this spot he was surprised by robbers, who, enticing him ashore, took from him his worldly goods and sampan—leaving him, as the noble youths may see, with nought but a bag of fruits." Then, with a deep groan, he threw the latter, which had been suspended by a string round his neck, upon the bank.

"But, Mr. Si-Ling," said Martin, "you have not told us how you got your living in Yugyacarta; and we must know that; for if as an honest trader

or labourer, we will take you with us: if as a vagabond—and you look more like that than anything else—well, you will have to sleep under a palm, and tramp it in the morning.”

“ Know then, oh noble youth, that Si-Ling is a great scholar, and the son of a scholar; for his worthy parent was a mandarin of letters, and a member of the college of Han-Lin, at Peking: thus thy servant is learned in history, and having studied that of Java since he has been here, relates stories to the nobles who seek amusement.”

“ A professional story-teller, then?” said I.

“The noble youth has divined aright: his servant, Si-Ling, is of the noble profession of story-tellers.”

“ More likely of the *ignoble* profession of rogues, if there be any truth in physiognomy,” whispered Martin—adding: “ Well, Mr. Si-Ling, get in, and stow yourself away in the stern; and as we float down the stream—for, the tide having turned, we don't want the oars—you may give us a taste of your quality.”

“ May the bones of the noble youths rest with those of their ancestors, and their descendants ever piously keep their tombs well swept, and strewn with fresh flowers!” replied the Chinese, getting into the sampan.

“ Much obliged,” replied Martin, laughing. “ You are kind, and we are grateful; nevertheless, we are in no hurry for anything half so good.”

When, however, we had put off, and were floating down the stream, he said :

“ Now, my friend, for ‘ a taste of your quality.’ Tell us a story.”

“ The noble youths are of the English island ? ” said the Chinese, interrogatively.

“ Oh yes ; so go on, and abuse the Dutch as much as you like.”

“ The story thy servant will tell is truth, and shows even how early the Dutch influence in Java began to change the Javanese princes from lions into wolves. The great Susunan Mangkorat, having entered into a treaty with the Dutch, greatly to the injury of his people and nobles, a certain chief named Truna Jaya, rose in rebellion against him, with the hope only of being able to rescue his royal master from his false friends the Hollanders ; but Truna, being unfortunate, was defeated, and compelled to fly to the mountains of Antang. There he remained with a few of his faithful followers, until, reduced by want, he was glad to make overtures of surrender. These were accepted ; but Truna, doubtful of the Susunan’s good faith while under the influence of the Dutch, refused to leave his fastness until better assurance of his safety had been given. Accordingly, his own uncle, the Prince of Madura, accompanied by a Dutch officer, was sent to beguile him. The unhappy prince then appeared before the monarch,

bound with cords, and with his wives, who were the Susunan's own sisters. The Susunan, pretending to be affected by the agony of his sisters, pardoned his brother-in-law, and promised to give him preferment; and great was the joy of the family of Truna, while he went to change his garment for one in which alone he could receive favours from his sovereign. But guess, oh noble youths, the horror of the princesses, when, upon their husband's return into the royal presence, the Susunan cried :

“ ‘ My brother, Truna Jaya, when I was at Tagal I made a vow that this my creese—Blaba—should never be sheathed until in your breast.’

“ On these words the nobles brought the unhappy man to the foot of the throne, from whence the Susunan, rising, stabbed him to the heart; and then commanded every noble to strike his creese into his body. The corpse being thus mangled, the Susunan arose again, crying in a loud voice :

“ ‘ Let his heart be devoured.’

“ The chiefs, obedient, rushed upon the body again, and, tearing out the heart, divided it into fragments of a nail's breadth, devouring it accordingly. The head they laid at the foot of the throne, but it was afterwards carried in procession before the Susunan; and when he retired at night to rest, he used it as a mat to wipe his feet upon.

To such a demon," concluded the Chinese, "had the vile Hollanders changed a prince of Java!"

"The savage beast!" exclaimed my brother; "but where were the civilized Dutch all this time?"\*

"Standing with arms folded, looking upon the scene; and that too, oh noble youth, although their generals had pledged their knightly honour for Truna's safety."

"It is a horrible tale, and almost impossible to believe," said I; nevertheless, it was gospel truth.

"It is but one of many, many incidents in the history of this land, that has sown hatred in the hearts of its people to the Dutch," replied the Chinese; "but," he added, "before thy servant relates another story, he prays of the noble youths to partake of this fruit—it is fresh-gathered."

And, oh! how our eyes sparkled, as he brought from his bag some slices of that most delicious of all known fruits, a mangosteen. This fruit, it is said, meets the approbation of persons of the greatest diversity of tastes in other matters—whether that diversity arises from peculiarity of

\* "During this scene," says the historian, "the Dutch general, officers, and party were present; but, astonished and appalled at the frightful scene which was transacted before them, they wanted the courage or magnanimity to interfere, though it was acknowledged that *their honour was pledged for the safety of Truna Jaya.*"

constitution or from national habits and antipathies. It is mildly acid, and has an extreme delicacy of flavour, without being luscious or cloying. In external appearance it has the look of a ripe pomegranate, but is smaller and more completely globular. A thick rind, hard on the outside, but soft and succulent within, incloses large seeds or kernels, surrounded by a soft, semi-transparent, snow-white pulp, now and then having a very slight crimson blush. This pulp is the edible part of the fruit, and persons in robust health may, without prejudice, eat a much larger quantity of it than of any other.

And as we had been some time without refreshment, we partook of this mangosteen to an extent that would have been injurious with any other fruit.

“Well,” said Martin, “this is refreshing after that horrible story; but proceed, Mr. Si-Ling—let us have another; of course, it will not be to the advantage of the Dutch.”

“It will not,” replied the Chinese; “but the noble youth shall judge for himself:—

“Since the earliest coming of the Dutch into Java, it has been their policy to set the native princes by the ears, and then take advantage of the internecine quarrels to increase their own power. Sometimes they would dethrone one sovereign and place a rival in his seat. One of the princes so



raised to the throne was the Pangeran of Pugar. Now the Prince of Sourabaya, Jayeng Rono, was his dearest friend and most confidential adviser, as also was the Prince of Madura. Unfortunately, Jayeng Rono fell under the displeasure of the Dutch—either, it is supposed, because he had thwarted some of their ambitious designs, or was wanting in subserviency. However, be that as it may, the Dutch general one day sent to the Susunan, demanding his life might be taken.

“The poor sovereign, who had not long before lost his friend the Prince of Madura, almost paralysed with astonishment and terror, exclaimed:

“‘What! I have already lost my right hand; would these Hollanders also take my left? No—it shall not be.’

“Then, without giving an answer to the Dutch—for he feared to offend them—he dispatched a messenger at once to his friend, who was absent from the capital, Cartasura, informing him that the Dutch demanded his life, but that, if he chose to resist, he should be secretly aided and abetted. The noble-minded Jayeng Rono, however, clearly foreseeing that resistance would involve the ruin, not only of himself, but of his whole family, came to the disinterested resolution of sacrificing his own life to secure the safety of his friends and relations, and therefore at once repaired to

Cartasura to meet his fate. Here he had many sad audiences with the Susunan. The latter, finding Jayeng would not fly, promised to protect his family, and complied with his request to appoint his brother to the place left vacant by his death. At length, the warrant for the prince's execution came from Batavia. The Susunan summoned him to the palace, and as, without a retainer, the old man (for Jayeng Rono *was* very old) entered the courtyard, he was met by the public executioner, who dispatched him upon the spot. So terrible, oh noble youths, has been the tyranny and oppression of the Dutch in Java!" concluded the Chinese; but, as I thought, with a curious leer in his eyes.

"Horrible!" said I; "but, Martin, I feel unaccountably sleepy."

"So do I," replied my brother, with a yawn; "the—the mangosteen hasn't agreed with us."

As for me, I could barely keep my ears open to listen to the concluding part, or rather epilogue to the *historiette*, which ran thus:—

"But, oh noble youths, the wicked are always punished, in this world or the next; so the murder of Jayeng Rono was fearfully avenged. The most formidable and destructive rebellion which has ever been known in the East broke out. Joyopuspito, brother to the deceased chief, accepted of his office, but only to use the influence which it

afforded him for revenge. He subdued all the districts in his vicinity—called to his assistance the people of Bali—was joined by the Madurese, and by several rebel princes of the House of Martaram; so that this formidable insurrection only terminated by his death, in the succeeding reign, after desolating the country for a great many years. The Chief of Sourabaya, in the many actions which he fought with the Dutch, and in all his proceedings, displayed so much enterprise, spirit, and conduct, that, but for the superior equipments and military science of the Europeans, he must have acquired the sovereignty of the island.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### WE ARE HOODWINKED BY THE CHINESE, WHO ROBS US OF OUR ALL.

I FELT very drowsy, as if suddenly awakened from a deep sleep. The story of the murder of Jayeng Rono was still ringing in my ears; the cunning leer of the Chinese was present to my mind's eye; but *where* was I?—afloat or ashore?—or—and I shuddered at the thought—once more in that terrible nest-cavern?—or could I be really awake? No—it must be nightmare. If so, a turn over upon my side—for I was lying upon my back—would be sufficient. Well, I did turn—ay, over and over again—and that proved I was not asleep in the sampan; but it proved another disagreeable fact—namely, that I was stark naked, and rolling upon a dry sandy earth. Then the thought flashed through my brain that I had been hocused—as it is termed in English police-courts—by the Chinese rogue; that the mangosteen, of which we had partaken with so much relish,

must have been steeped in some narcotic plant. But my brother—where was he? On that head, however, I was soon set at ease; for, coming to, I suppose, almost at the same moment as myself, he cried out:

“ Claud, old fellow ! ”

“ Ay, ay, Martin.”

“ Thank Heaven, you are here somewhere,” he replied; “ but where the deuce are we? It is very dark—I can’t see. Is it to-day, to-morrow, or yesterday ? ”

“ To-day, I think ; but I don’t know.”

“ Then which end—night or morning ? ”

“ That I don’t know ; but I should say morning.”

“ Ah! I have it,” he added quickly; “ we have been half-poisoned by that rascally Chinese. Hang the thief! he has come in for a pretty thing—our boat, rifles, and game.”

“ Then he hasn’t stripped *you* of your clothes, Martin ? ”

“ Ah! but he has, though, the rogue!—only I thought of my rifle and game first.”

“ Come, Martin,” said I, “ there is one consolation ; there seems to have been neither mosquitoes nor white ants about, since we have been here.”

“ Bother! but I don’t know that—every here and there I feel as if I had been drilled. When the light comes, perhaps we shall find ourselves as full of small holes as a couple of colanders ; but

give me your hand—that is, if you can tell where I am, by my voice.”

“All right,” I said; and, for a few minutes, we played a game of blind-man’s-buff, and at length only succeeded in meeting, by both tumbling over the same tree-stump. Then we took hold of each other’s hand, and sat awaiting the first streak of daylight.

“Shouldn’t I like to come across Master Si-ling? I tell you what, Claud, I could even now forgive the fellow if he would only bring us our clothes; for what a couple of fools we shall look to the first person we meet, and how Prabu and the men will laugh at us, for being so easily gulled!”

“Well, I don’t know: they ought not to laugh at us, for we shall at least look the picture of innocence.”

“Ah! I have it, old fellow—I tell you what we will do.”

“What?”

“We’ll just rig ourselves out with palm-leaves.”

“A very good notion, Martin,” said I; and as soon as it became light enough we gathered some; and, by dint of much perseverance and a little ingenuity—such as using a piece of sharp stone for a knife, the fibres of rattans for strings, and a thin piece of cane for a needle, or rather

piercer—we managed to encase our bodies in palm-leaves. Then, each taking one leaf as a head-covering, we set out, barefooted, for the river which, as the ground we stood upon was very high, we could see at a distance of little more than a quarter of a mile; and the hearty laughs we had at each other's appearance almost made us forget, if not forgive, the Chinese rogue for the trick he had played us.

Still, our position was not by any means enviable for we were obliged to keep along the river-banks with the chances of a tiger suddenly springing from the jungle on one side, or a crocodile from the other, without arms for our defence, and without shoes to protect our feet and aid our running.

"Truly," said Martin, "we should make a couple of nice morsels for the breakfast of any tiger or crocodile out for an early stroll; but I don't care half so much about that, as the laugh they will have at us on board the prahu."

"Well, let us make the best of it, Martin; for, at least, we shall have a *palmy* time of it before we reach the prahu."

"Have done, Claud—don't pun. Don't you know it has been said, that a man who will make a pur will pick a pocket?"

"He would be a clever man who could pick ours now, Martin," said I. "But see, yonder is the carcase of the crocodile."

"This is lucky, for we can't be a great distance from the mouth of the river. But look you—yonder is a better sight," he added, pointing to a bend of the river, around which a man was paddling a sampan at a rapid rate.

"Hurrah, old boy!" I cried; for it was Kati, on his return from the town.

"I don't cry hurrah, Claud, for I feel as if I should like to shrink into my shoes."

"The Chinese has prevented any such feat, Martin."

"Oh, bother, Claud! but how shall we make him see us, for he is looking neither to the right nor to the left?"

"Oh, that will be easy enough; but, first, let us put our heads through the leaves, or he will never recognise us," said I.

Then we put our heads through so that the leaves fell over our shoulders like capes, but of a very odd fashion; and, as Kati pulled nearer, shouted to him. At the sound of our voices he looked around, but (as he afterwards related) taking us for a couple of those forest-demons, which from his childhood he had been taught to believe in, he gave a kind of shriek of surprise, and plied his oars the faster.

"Bother! what a fool he is to take us for wild beasts!"

"Wild beasts don't walk on their hind legs,



Martin. No—he takes us for forest-demons,” said I, now really fearing that he would leave us where we were.

“I will jump into the river, and, if it pleases the crocodiles, will swim to him,” cried Martin.

“No, no—for heaven’s sake, no!” I cried, seizing his arm—“you shall not; the river swarms with man-eaters. At least, let us try stones first;” and at once I hurled at the boatman a stone, which hit him on the back.

Now, no greater insult could have been offered to one of his race: thus, forgetting his fear of demons, he turned the prow of his boat, and, leaping ashore creese in hand, prepared to run “a muck”; but as he came near, we tore the leaves from our shoulders. He stopped suddenly, as if shot, or petrified.

“What demons,” he cried, “have taken the form of the young sahibs?”

“I told you he would take us for spirits, Martin,” said I.

“No, no,” replied my brother, approaching him, as he shrunk backwards in no dissembled terror; “we are no demons, but real rightdown flesh and blood, though packed in palm-leaves.”

“The Great Spirit protect His slave, but it is the sahibs!” he exclaimed affectionately, not embracing, but smelling us both.

“Yes, Kati, we are the sahibs, there is no doubt

about it," said Martin; "and if you will not laugh at us for a couple of simpletons, I will tell you how it happens that we are here, like masquerading ourang-outangs;" and then he related our adventure with the professed story-teller, to which Kati, having listened attentively, replied :

"That Chinese is a dog, and the son of a dog! The sahibs could not help themselves, for he had mixed with the mangosteen the Kachubong."\*

"Come, Claud, that's refreshing; for of course it was no more our fault than if we had been stabbed in the dark, or shot at by some sneak from behind a tree," said Martin.

"The sahib is right, but if catchee long-tailed dog, he rob no man more," replied Kati, savagely, fingering the handle of his creese; and then he completely restored us, or at least my brother, to good humour, by telling us that it was a trick commonly practised upon the natives by the Chinese, illustrating it by an adventure that one of his shipmates had met with about a year before.

This man, being upon a journey up one of the rivers, was accosted by a Chinese from the bank, who requested a passage, for which he tendered a fare and a share of his food. The sailor received

\* Among the narcotic plants of Java, the most remarkable is the *Datura*, called by the natives *Kachubong*: the fruit of this plant produces the most complete stupor, though its effects are not lasting.

him, and ate heartily of the viands, which, being mixed with the datura, induced stupor and heavy sleep ; and when he awoke, he found himself lying stark naked in a forest, fifteen miles distant from the place where he had taken in the Chinese, robbed of his canoe and all his property.

As I have said, the tide was with us : we were not, therefore, long in reaching the prahu, on board of which we were most heartily welcomed by Prabu, who embraced us after the European fashion. Indeed, so disconsolate had he been at our absence, and so delighted was he at seeing us safe again on board, that he had but few words to say of the rogue of a Chinese, or our loss of game and arms. As for our wild shipmates, they crowded round to listen to our story, and having heard it, flourished their creeses as savagely as if the Chinese had been before them ; all of which so pleased my brother, that I can only describe it, at the risk of being thought vulgar, in his own words :

“ These fellows, Claud, are ‘ jolly bricks.’ Hang me, if one of them has laughed at us ! But, by Jingo, the fellows at our school would have chaffed us not a little, if we, after nutting in the woods, had shown ourselves in such a precious costume.”

“ Ay, Martin ; but then our schoolfellows were *civilized*, and these men are only savages ! ”

“ Why, Claud, do you mean to say that the

more civilized we are, the more prone are we to laugh at the misfortunes of our fellows?"

"Yes; some of the best jokes are made out of the real or fancied (it matters not which to the butt) miseries of others, while savages are always serious, either to friends or to enemies."

"Claud, old fellow, you are a cynic."

"That is better than being a wit, or witting at the expense of the feelings of others."

"Well, I don't know, perhaps you are right—I am not so wise an old fellow as you; but see, Prabu is beckoning us to his cabin."

Our captain had a meal ready, the best he could have made up, consisting of hot rice, dried fish, a fish-sauce, and slices of pork, to say nothing of a cup of hot rice-spirit, of which he insisted we should partake before saying another word—which good things made Martin bold enough to say:

"Now, Prabu, I don't like half-confidence, and you know we shall be in a pretty mess if the Dutch happen to catch us; besides, we are all rowing in one boat, or prahu, which is the same thing. Do therefore, like a good old Prabu as you are, tell us upon what errand you sent Kati up to that town with the very hard name?"

"Sahib," replied Prabu, in measured tones, "I may tell you, Kati went to tell the Chief of Pugar our adventure with the Dutch ships, that

he might be on his guard, knowing that the suspicions of the Government had become excited."

"New conspiracies!—I thought so," said Martin, laughing.

"Not so, sahib, but a part of the old one," replied Prabu, astutely.

"But, anyhow, you will manage to get us hanged, drawn, and quartered, or something equally pleasant, if we don't look out."

"Will the sahib go ashore at Pugar? From thence it will not be difficult to get back to Batavia, to Mynheer's house, if he wills it; nay, he shall have two of the best of the prahu's men as guides," replied Prabu, but this time with a serio-comic manner, that showed he understood my brother to be bantering him; but Martin, now in turn most serious, answered:

"Do you mean that Pugar is the end of your voyage?"

"No, it is not halfway."

"Then look you, Prabu, as I won't do anything by halves, I will just go the whole length with you, for 'one may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.'"

"A bad proverb, and one that encourages the weak in vice, Master Martin," said I.

"Oh, bother, you old wiseacre! But, Prabu," he added, addressing our companion, "just lend us a couple of guns, and we will soon replace

the game lost by our simplicity, and the rogue of a Chinese."

"Sahib Martin," he replied, "it is not possible; we have a good wind now, and shall lose it by staying here longer."

So, after all our adventures in search of fresh food, we had to continue our voyage with but one pig: however, that was better than none.

Upon our reaching Pugar, the last province to the east of Java, we anchored at the mouth of the river, while Prabu, taking with him a couple of boats, and several chests and casks of arms, proceeded into the interior to have an interview with, and take fresh instructions from, the Pangeran his master. During his absence, which lasted eight days, Martin and I amused ourselves by going ashore and killing small game; for Prabu had given us two muskets—he possessed neither rifles nor fowling-pieces. When he returned to the prahu, he appeared in excellent spirits, and admitted us into his confidence so far as to tell us that he was charged with a mission to the Rajah of Billing, a large sovereignty in the island of Bali, to whom, upon certain conditions, he was to deliver arms, although what those conditions were he would *not* tell us.

We had a good brisk wind nearly all along the coast, but as we entered the straits which cut off the island of Bali from Java, we fell in with a

dead calm, which would have been monotonous indeed but for Prabu, who would for hours sit and interest us with many particulars about the island.

“What religion are the Balinese?” asked Martin, upon one of these occasions.

“Hindoo, of the sect of Siva.”

“Then, like the people of Western India, they are divided into castes.”

“Yes—four—the Priesthood, Soldiery, Merchants, and Servants, called *Brahmana*, *Satriya*, *Wisiya*, and *Sudra*.”

“What was the supposed origin of these castes can you tell me?”

“Yes—the god Brahma produced the *Brahmana* from his mouth, which means wisdom; the *Satriya* from his chest, which imports strength; the *Wisiya* from his abdomen, which implies that it is his business to furnish subsistence to society and the *Sudra* from his feet, which implies that he is destined to obedience and servitude.”

“Have they always been Hindoos?”

“No, sahib—the religion of Siva was introduced into Bali about four hundred years ago before that the prevailing religion was Buddhism. A few years previous to the Mahomedan conversion of the Javanese, there arrived in Java a number of Brahmins of the sect of Siva, who received protection from Browisoyo, the last

Hindoo sovereign of Mojopahit, a kingdom of Java, whose sea-bed was washed by the Straits of Madura; but the latter kingdom being overthrown, the Brahmins fled to Bali, under their leader Wahu Bahu, and there disseminated their doctrines."

"But, Prabu," I interposed, "is it not curious that the Mahomedans—having, by their usual means, converted the whole of Java and the adjacent islands to the faith of your prophet—should have permitted the Balinese to continue the terrible worship of Siva?"

"'What is written *is* written.' The time for their conversion had not, perhaps, come; then the refugees were fierce and determined, and the shores of Bali are inaccessible to conquerors, for they have neither harbours nor even anchoring-ground."

"Why do you call the religion of Siva terrible, Claud?" asked my brother.

"Because it is a superstition of horrors—one that enjoins everything that is terrible—blood and destruction. It is the reverse of Christianity, even as black is to white; ay, and of Buddhism, which, pagan as it is, yet teaches only that which is innocent and simple."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ADVENTURES IN BALI.

WE fully experienced the difficulty a hostile army might have in effecting a landing upon the shores of Bali; for we were a full week prowling along the coast, with all our eyes open, ere we discovered a good anchorage, and then it was upon a creek or inlet to the westward. True, we landed in the dominions of the Rajah or King of Billing, but it was in the remotest part, and a district under the rule of an almost independent chief. Going ashore, the natives, who were of a more savage aspect and manner than I had expected to see in Bali, flourished their creeses and spears in our faces, demanding who and what we were; but when Prabu told them he was an envoy from the Pangeran of Pugar to the Rajah of Bali and desired to pass through that territory, they became suddenly as submissive as slaves, and

begged he would follow them to their chief—a request with which he gladly complied, Martin and I following.

They conducted us to the palace, which consisted of several buildings, erected upon terraces called *pandapas*; each of these were four-sided, with a thatched roof, and supported by four wooden pillars, around which was a moveable hoarding of bamboos. To one of these we were introduced, where we found a ferocious-looking little savage, in the *undress* of his race, smoking a large pipe, and in earnest converse with a younger but equally ferocious-looking personage, whom we afterwards discovered to be his son.

“How, dogs,” exclaimed the senior, “is this that you bring a stranger to this presence without our bidding?”

“The lives of his slaves,” replied the chief of our guides, trembling, “are at the great lord’s disposal; but the noble stranger is an ambassador to his Highness the Rajah. It may please our dread Prince to question him.”

“Ah! what words are these?” cried the senior, playing with his creese.

“Thy servant, O great chief and warrior,” replied Prabu, “has a mission to his Highness the Rajah of Blilling, from the Pangeran of Pugar; he therefore craves help and aid to reach the royal city and palace, for it is only upon your

lordship's territory he has been able to find a landing-place."

At the name of their royal master the chiefs bent their heads low, and the senior desired Prabu to be seated by his side. For several minutes they conversed together in low tones, and although we could not hear their words, we had little doubt of their importance; for the whole time the Chief kept playing with the handle of his creese, and rolling his savage eyes about terribly. When, however, it was concluded, he ordered his slaves to conduct us to the largest of the pandapas, which was to be at our service during our sojourn in his territory. Moreover, he invited us to a banquet in the evening.

"Why, Prabu," said Martin, when we were alone in the pandapa, "by what magic words did you manage so easily to tame that savage old gentleman?"

"By inspiring him with a hope, or probability, that the rule of the Dutch in the Archipelago, or at least in Java and its dependencies, was approaching its end."

"More conspiring! By Jingo, it is too bad! We must look after our heads, Claud."

"But what *especial* cause has this chief for hating the Hollanders?" I asked.

"One that will never be forgotten or forgiven, while any of his race remain to avenge it. But

listen :—His father, who was chief or prince—for he held the latter title—of this same district, having offended his suzerain the Rajah, had to fly for his life ; and this he did, with his princess and attendants, to a Dutch frigate then cruising in the straits. Now the captain—knowing the policy of his Government was ever to foment the rebellion of the principal vassals against their princes—received them on board with courtesy. Unfortunately, however, forgetting the fastidiousness of Orientals in all matters connected with their women, he welcomed the princess, after the fashion of his own countrymen, by kissing her neck. Alarmed at such—to her—strange proceeding, the lady screamed aloud ; whereupon her husband, believing that an insult had been intentionally offered to his wife, rushed upon the commander and stabbed him to the heart, while, at the same time, his followers commenced ‘a muck’ among the crew. The Europeans, however, after a hard fight, put the prince and his people to death, and sent the head of the former to the rajah from whose anger he had fled.”

“Well,” said Martin, “the Dutch may have committed a great number of unpardonable sins in Java ; but in that case they were decidedly in the right, and the savage only met with his deserts.”

“God is great !—*who knows ?*” returned Prabu ;

for he would upon no occasion admit the Dutch to be in the right. "What is written is written," he added. "It will have a good ending, for it has raised an unquenchable thirst for vengeance in the hearts of a powerful tribe."

But, I have said, we were invited to a banquet. Well, it consisted of fish, fruits, sweetmeats, and a spirit distilled from rice, of which, towards the latter part, the chiefs partook plentifully—a rare occurrence with the generally abstemious islanders; but, then, our host had become greatly excited, as we shall hereafter see, at the cause of Prabu's visit. The most entertaining portion, however, to Martin and I was the performances of the dancing-girls. The remainder of the viands having been removed, there entered the large hall some twelve very pretty but oddly-attired girls: each wore a plumed head-dress, glittering with spangles and gold—pendants of the same metal, which reached to the shoulders—jewelled necklaces—a jacket richly embroidered with the precious metal, beneath which was a waistcoat of the same material—loose trousers of cloth of gold, well bespangled, fastened at the waist by a broad golden girdle, and at the knees by a cord, from which hung golden bells, that tinkled at every movement. Their arms and legs were uncovered, with the exception of adornments of gold, such as bracelets, anklets, and leglets. Then each girl was armed with a

richly-mounted sword, and carried a fan with bells attached.

As they entered the hall, they sang the glories of their master, keeping time upon a small drum or tom-tom ; but approaching his seat, they fell upon their knees, and saluted him by joining their hands and lifting up their heads ; then they began to dance, with one knee upon the ground, gracefully bending their arms and bodies. After this, they danced upright, keeping time with their drums ; then they would place their hands upon their swords, or pretend to be taking aim with a bow ; and they went through many other pretty movements, which so interested us that we regretted when the entertainment was concluded.

“ In their love of dancing,” writes Crawford, “ the Indian islanders outvie the French. It is a passion with them, and not only adopted as an amusement, but mingled with the more serious affairs of life ; but their dancing is not like that of the savages of America, nor that practised in Western India. Like the latter, they have professed dancing-women, who exhibit for hire, but, unlike them, they occasionally dance themselves ; and in public processions, and even more serious occasions, dancing forms a portion of the solemnities.

“ As for the style of it, as in all Asiatic countries, it is grave, stately, and slow ; it is not the legs, but the body, and especially the arms down

to the very fingers, that are employed: dexterity, agility, or liveliness are never attempted. To the gravity and solemnity natural to the inhabitants of a warm climate, any display of agility would seem as indecorous as their stately and sluggish minuet-dancing appears insupportably tiresome to the more volatile and lively tempers of Europeans."

"The dancing of the Indian islanders may be considered as of three kinds: their serious dances on public occasions, the private dances of individuals at festivities, and the exhibitions of professed dancers. Of the first kind are the war-dances: if a warrior throws out a defiance to his enemy, it is done in a dance, in which he brandishes his spear and creese, pronouncing an emphatic challenge; if a native of the same country runs a muck, ten to one but he braves death in a dancing posture. When they swear eternal hatred to their enemies, or fidelity to their friends, the solemnity is accompanied by a dance; all orders executed in the presence of a Javanese monarch, on public occasions, are accompanied by a dance; when a message is to be conveyed to the royal ear, the messenger advances with a solemn dance, and retreats in the same way. The ambassadors from one native prince in Java to another follow the same course, when coming into and retiring from the presence of the sovereign to whom they are

deputed. At fights between the buffalo and tiger, when the persons whose business it is to let the latter loose from its cage, have performed their duty, and received the royal nod to retire (an occasion, one would think, when dancing might be omitted), they do so in a slow dance and solemn strut, with some risk of being devoured by the tiger in the midst of their performances.

“Previous to the introduction of the Mahomedan religion, it appears to have been the custom among all the Oriental islanders, for men of rank to dance at their public festivities, when heated with wine. This exhibition appears to have been a kind of war-dance; the performer drew his creese, and went through all the evolutions of a mock fight. At present the practice is most common among the Javanese, with every chief of whom dancing, far from being considered scandalous as among the people of Western India, is held to be a necessary accomplishment. Respectable women never join in it, and with that sex dancing is confined to those whose profession it is. In the most crowded circle of strangers, a Javanese chief will exhibit in the mazes of the dance with an ordinary dancing-girl.

“The professed dancers differ little, but in inferiority of skill, from the common dancing-girls of Hindostan: those who have been often disgusted with the latter will find still less to interest them



in the former. The music to which the dancing is performed is indeed, generally, incomparably better than that of Western India, although the vocal part of it is equally harsh and dissonant: now and then a single voice of great tenderness and melody may be found, but whenever an effort is made at raising it for the accommodation of an audience, it becomes harsh and unmusical. The songs sung on such occasions are often nothing more than unpremeditated effusions; but among the Javanese, to whom I am now more particularly alluding, there are some national ballads that might bear a comparison with the boasted odes of the Persian minstrels."

"Why, Prabu, man, what ails thee?—what makes you look so savage?" said I, as, towards the middle of the next day, the captain returned to us, after having paid a morning visit to the palace.

"The Chief has gone mad: he has summoned his principal men to a council of war, to solemnly declare his vengeance against the Dutch."

"Well," asked Martin, "how can *you* complain, my friend, when you incited him, by intimating that his suzerain, the Rajah, had already joined the conspiracy?"

"But this demonstration will be premature. Should it become known in Batavia, it will ruin all; a great blow has to be struck, but in the dark."

“Well, Prabu, I wish no harm to you, but, honestly and candidly, I *do* wish I was out of this matter altogether,” said Martin—adding: “I don’t mind fair open fighting, but blows in the dark are only dealt by cowards.”

“The Sahib Martin,” he replied, “is prudent; he shall have his desire when we reach the mainland; but this savage Macassar!”

“Macassar!” I exclaimed. “Why, Prabu, he is a Balinese chief.”

“He was born in Bali, sahib, but he is descended from a prince of Macassar, who, upon the conquest of that country by the Hollanders, fled with the whole of his tribe, and, by the permission of the then Rajah of Blilling, settled upon this coast and became governor and chief of the district. But listen,” added Prabu, as we heard the sound of drums and brass instruments; “the chief and his principal officers are about to take the oaths. Will the sahibs go with me?”

“Of course, we will see the whole play out, if you will permit us,” said my brother; and then we went to one of the oddest sights I have ever seen, either before that time or since. I will describe it as briefly as possible:—

Some fifty or sixty sub-chiefs, or leaders of divisions, were assembled near the palace in full war costume, each having around his brow a white fillet—the symbol of hostility: at their head stood the

grand Chief, and his son Mahomed. At a signal from the former, a huge banner was unfurled; this having been sprinkled with blood, the Chief dipped his creese in a vessel of water and then drank of the liquid; after this he began to dance around the banner with wild fantastic motions, brandishing all the while his bare weapon, as if about to plunge it into the breast of an enemy; then coming to a standstill, and holding his creese upwards, he proclaimed war and eternal hatred against their oppressors the Dutch. "And witness, ye men of Bali," he concluded; "should I violate this oath, I pray that this, my favourite and beloved creese, may prove more injurious to me than to my foe—that my head may be cut off and left upon the field of battle, and that my heart may be devoured by the enemy."

The ceremony being thus opened, a ring was formed, in which, one by one, the chiefs performed an extraordinary series of dumb motions—a kind of foreshadowing of all they intended to do to the enemy. The following description, however, of the performances of one will answer for all:—

"A chief rushes into the ring with a wild shriek and a ferocious look, with creese in one hand and spear in the other; he traverses the ground, leaping from one side of the ring to the other, and, in a menacing posture, bids defiance to some fancied

enemy ; then he stamps his feet upon the ground, and shakes his head, distorts his features, and makes his teeth chatter again ; then he throws his lance, and with his creese hacks and hews at the airy enemy, shrieking all the time. At length, nearly tired out, he flies to the middle of the ring, where, seeming to have his foe at his mercy, with two or three desperate cuts off goes the imaginary head of the imaginary enemy, and he withdraws triumphantly and amidst the plaudits of his comrades."

"It's really very funny," said my brother, in his usual flippant way.

"Hush, Martin! The Chief is going to speak," said I, with great difficulty preventing a laugh.

The Chief then—having first bestowed a little particularly strong abuse upon the Hollanders—turning to Prabu, said :

"Observe, O thou servant of the great and patriotic Pangeran of Pugar, and ambassador to our royal master the Rajah of Blilling—I am prepared to live and die with you ; I am as a spear in your hands, ready to do execution in whatever quarter directed."

"Observe," cried the son, "I shall be in your hands like a skein of white thread, ready to assume whatever colour the skill of the dyer may please to give it ;" and so they continued one after the other, till Prabu, had he not known their natures,

might have believed himself at the head of a army of conquerors.

This comedy being finished, all present were invited to a banquet at the Chief's house, and the followed a tragic scene of a very revolting nature but, inasmuch as it exemplifies the manner and customs of these wild people, I must relate it. The dishes being emptied and removed, and the dancing-girls having concluded their performance, the Chief arose and addressed a priest :

"My elder brother," said he, "last night I had a dream, in which the whole of the accursed Dutch appeared to me in the shape of women. Tell me, I pray thee, its interpretation?"

"My lord," replied the priest, "the dream is good ; for women imply prosperity, and your expedition will have a fortunate termination."

"It is good—now let my brother drink deep," said the Chief ; "for numerous shall be the baskets full of heads the Dutch Governor shall receive, but this time those of friends instead of enemies."

And then commenced a scene which beggars description. With every fresh draught, they boasted more and more of their prowess ; then, when there was scarcely one amongst them who could have stood upon his legs had he tried, thousands and thousands of Hollanders were slain with tongue and gesticulations ; but the Chief exceeded them

all in swagger, and as liars are said sometimes to believe their own lies by the frequency of telling them, so he began to believe himself a demi-god.

“Who among my people,” he cried frantically, “will dare say there is a Dutch sword, or bullet, that can harm their lord?”

“Our great Chief is invulnerable!” all present cried.

“It is so, my brethren—you have spoken rightly. Behold!” The whole company arose with cries of alarm, but it was too late. The savage, intoxicated to madness by enmity and wine, had tested his invulnerability by thrusting his creese into his breast: the result was a failure, for he had fallen dead. But let me draw a veil over the tragic scene, merely informing my readers that such acts are not uncommon among those wild races. As a rule, temperate and abstemious to a degree, when intoxicated they become—as, in deed, do all people in a greater or lesser degree—maniacs.

Very cruel are the customs of the Macassars, or people of Celebes, from whom this chief was descended. When an enemy falls dead, or wounded, the victor strikes off his head, and, placing it on the point of a spear, bears it away in triumph. “This, however,” says Crawford, “is far from being the utmost length to which they proceed,

for on some occasions they actually go so far as to devour the heart of an enemy, either to gratify revenge or aggravate their usual ferocity. This practice is by no means unfrequent, and there is hardly a warrior of note who, at some period or other, has not partaken of this horrid repast. I saw several who had done so, and one person coolly observed, that it did not differ in taste from the offal of a goat or buffalo; but another less hardened, assured me that he did not sleep for three nights after his meal, so haunted was his imagination at the thought of what he had done."

The Javanese, however, when their hostile passions are aroused, are not less ferocious than their neighbours. In the last great war in Java, Mangkunegara, having gained an advantage over the Dutch and the Susunan, announced his success to his coadjutor, Mankubumi, by letter, transmitting to him at the same time *the ears* of the enemy killed and taken in action. The latter prince, having read the letter, applauded the chief for the victory he had gained and for the ears he had transmitted, which he forthwith directed to be sliced, and stewed along with the flesh of buffaloes, and with spices. This mixture he gave to his people, directing them to eat it with rice; he did this, he said, because his followers were not present in the fight and had not obtained the ears of an enemy in battle, and that, by thus partaking of them as food, the

might not be put to shame because they were absent from the fight : he wished to inspire his army with the same feelings as if they had been actually engaged. The people ate, one and all, and bowed in respectful silence.

But whatever we may think of the savages, what can be said in defence of the *civilized* Hollanders, who not only, as we have seen on another occasion, remained quiet spectators of the horrors perpetrated amongst the contending princes, but were themselves in the habit of receiving basketfuls of their enemies' heads as valuable gifts ! Imagine, O my reader, an English Governor-General keeping such a diary as the following, which is a literal transcript :—

“ *Thursday, January 29th.*—In the morning the Boni interpreter came to the castle, accompanied by a messenger from Datu Baringang, who presented to his Excellency, in a basket, four enemies' heads, said to be the heads of Kraing Borisala and of three galarangs” (a rajah and three inferior chiefs).

“ *Friday, 30th.*—Five heads more were brought to his Excellency this morning, reported to be those of some chiefs of the enemy, taken prisoners in the action at Tikere yesterday, when they were defeated, and pursued, with the loss of fifty men, by Arung Panchana.”



## CHAPTER XIX.

### WE VISIT THE CAPITAL OF BILLING, AND WITNESS SOME WIDOW-BURNING.

THE tragic end of the late Chief delayed us more than a week, for, as a matter of courtesy, we were obliged to remain till after the funeral. As, however, like his ancestors, he had died a Mahomedan, his obsequies—very different from others we were shortly to witness—were performed, after the manner of that religion, without ostentation. About the eighth day, when the new Chief considered it decent to admit strangers to his presence, he sent for Prabu.

“O servant of the patriot Pangeran,” he said, “it is thy most earnest desire to proceed to the palace of our royal master, the Rajah?”

“It is the command of my master, and if I live I must obey,” replied Prabu.

“Know then,” said the Chief, “it is the duty of the vassal to notify to his prince the death of his predecessor and his own accession: for this

purpose, two of my principal chiefs proceed in my state-prahu with presents to the Rajah. Wilt thou accompany them?"

"Generous and gracious is thy offer, O Chief, and many are the thanks of thy servant," replied Prabu; and so the next morning, horses being brought to our lodgings, we—at least all but Kati—had mounted and were about to set forth for the river, which led to the capital of the Rajah's dominions, when Kati, after looking at his steed for a minute, drew his creese, and rolled his eyes about very fiercely.

"Great Heaven! Martin—Prabu," I cried, "he is about running a muck;" and such, I believe, was his intention, had not his captain commanded him to sheath his weapon and declare his grievance.

"The dog—the son of a burnt mother!" he exclaimed (pointing to the slave who had brought the horses), "has sought to make me eat dirt—he has given me a lamed mare;" at which great cause of passion, Martin and I laughed. Not so, however, Prabu, who at once reprimanded the slave, and ordered him to bring another horse; for, as we then for the first time discovered, no greater disgrace can be offered to a man than a *mare* for a steed.

This little difficulty being got over, we rode forward through the jungle until we reached the river, where we found the prahu, and the two chiefs on

board ready to receive us, which they did in a very friendly manner. This vessel, although not built, like ours, for long voyages, was large enough to hold, if necessary, nearly a hundred persons, and arranged into various rooms—in fact, a kind of floating house, in which the chief, attended by his retinue and the ladies of his household, could take their pleasure for days together. As for the two chiefs, men of very different ages, they were companionable, pleasant personages enough, except when speaking of the Dutch, then they were ferocious. Indeed, the eldest was one of the many natives of the island we had met, who chronicled a vendetta in his heart against their European conquerors.

It appeared that his father, a principal chief of one of the eastern provinces, having risen in arms against the Dutch, and being defeated and slain, he and an only brother, to whom he was passionately attached, had been sold as slaves to one of the merchants of Batavia. The merchant continuing, over a series of years, to treat the two youths very cruelly, one of them, the brother, had in a moment of desperation slain his master: for this crime he was condemned to death, and his brother compelled to stand by and witness the execution. It must have been a terrible sight, as indeed it must be a lasting disgrace to a nation, both European and Christian, who could have inflicted such a punishment. But

let my readers judge for themselves by the very words of a Dutchman, who, having witnessed one of these executions, thus records it :—

“The punishments inflicted at Batavia are excessively severe, *especially such as fall upon the natives.* I saw an execution of this kind of a slave who had murdered his master, which was done in the following manner : The criminal was led in the morning to the place of execution, being a grass-plot, and laid upon his stomach, held by four men. The executioner made a transverse incision at the lower part of the body ; he then introduced the sharp point of the spike, which was about six feet long and made of polished iron, into the wound, so that it passed between the backbone and the skin. Two men drove it forcibly upwards along the spine, while the executioner held the end and gave it a proper direction, till it came out of the neck and shoulders. The lower end was then put into a wooden post and riveted fast, and the sufferer was lifted up thus impaled, and the post stuck in the ground. At the top of the post, about ten feet from the ground, there was a kind of little bench, upon which the body rested.

“The insensibility or fortitude of the wretched man was incredible. He did not utter the least complaint, except when the spike was riveted into the pillar ; the hammering and shaking occa-

sioned by it seemed to be intolerable to him, and he then bellowed out with pain, and likewise, once again, when he was lifted up and set in the ground. He sat in this dreadful situation till death put an end to his torments, which, fortunately, happened the next day, about three o'clock in the afternoon. He owed this *speedy* termination of his misery to a light shower of rain, which continued for about an hour, and he gave up the ghost half an hour afterwards.

“There have been instances, at Batavia, of criminals who have been impaled in the dry season, and have remained alive for *eight* or *nine* days without any food or drink, which is prevented being given them by a guard, who is stationed at the place of execution for that purpose. One of the surgeons of the city assured me that none of the parts immediately necessary to life are injured by impalement, which makes the punishment the more cruel and intolerable, but that as soon as any water gets into the wound it mortifies, and occasions gangrene—which directly attacks the more noble parts, and brings on death almost immediately.”

Speaking again of the slave, the same writer continues :—

“This miserable sufferer continually complained of insufferable thirst, which is peculiarly incident to this terrible punishment. The criminals are

exposed during the whole day to the burning rays of the sun, and are unceasingly tormented by numerous stinging insects. I went to see him again about three hours before he died, and found him conversing with the bystanders. This he did with great composure; yet an instant afterwards he burst out in the bitterest complaints of unquenchable thirst, and raved for drink, while no one was allowed to alleviate, by a single drop of water, the excruciating torments he underwent."

These are the kind of punishments meted out to a subjected race by a *Christian* people—a people, too, who have themselves known the lash, the stake, the thumb-screw, and the thousand other devilish inventions of torture adopted by the Governors of the tyrant Philip, in the Low Countries, to suppress mental and political freedom. One would have thought that their own great sufferings would have taught them forbearance to others, but no! Scarcely had they burst their own bonds, than, voyaging to the East, their insatiate thirst for gold rendered them willing slaves to the strong, as in China and Japan—tyrants to the weak, as in the Archipelago. Taking advantage of the simple islanders, who received them with the warmest hospitality, they commenced a series of small conquests; but finding themselves called upon to exercise the functions of sovereigns and

politicians, these rapacious adventurers—too weak and incompetent to undertake a conquest upon a grand scale, and by which it is possible the natives then, settled under so many petty despots, might have been benefited—had recourse to a policy of subtlety and intrigue, the consequence of which has been continued wars, waste of human life, and a mutual hatred between them and the natives, to the ruin and destruction of the islands, and the great misery of their inhabitants.

Equally blamable are the Dutch in having neglected to teach their Asiatic subjects the full value of their native soil and climate, and for their shortsighted policy in keeping from them a knowledge of European machinery, by means of which labour would have been made a hundred times more productive, and the people prosperous. This is especially exemplified, as we shall now see, in the present state of the cotton manufactures in these islands.

For the greater part of our journey, we found the banks upon both sides of the river covered with dense jungle: here and there, however, there were extensive tracts of cleared land, upon which hundreds of women were busily engaged.

“A glorious country for lazy men!—for it is only the women who labour in the fields,” said Martin.

“Aye, they are picking cotton,” replied Prabu;

and afterwards we learned that Bali was famous for its production of cloth, and that the labours of the loom, and the whole operation which the raw material undergoes, from the moment it is brought from the field until it is fit for apparel, is performed by women only. It is not very gallant, truly, but then it only shows a rude state of society ; for such was originally the case among the great nations of Asia—the Arabians, Persians, Hindoos, and Chinese, although, ages since, they have passed that era in the art. Then their process of weaving is so rude and unskilful, and consequently so expensive, that it is scarcely too much to say, that Nature's rich gift of a soil to produce the raw material seems wasted upon them. But, as I have said, the shortsighted, avaricious Dutch are to blame for this, for they might have introduced the European processes, by which they would have no less enriched themselves than the natives. Picture to yourself, my reader, such a substitute for calico-printing as is described below, in a country over which Europeans have ruled for nearly two centuries and a half!—

Of calico-printing the Javanese are entirely ignorant, but they have a singular substitute. The part not intended to be coloured, or that which forms the ground in a web of cloth, they daub over with melted wax. The cloth thus treated is thrown into the dyeing-vat, and the interstices take the



colour of the pattern ; if a second or third colour is to be added, the operation is to be repeated on the ground preserved by the first application of wax—more wax is applied, and the cloth is once, or oftener, consigned to the vat. The greater refinement attempted, the more certain seems to be the failure. Moreover, this awkward substitute for printing costs 100 per cent., at least, on the price of the cloth ; but notwithstanding the unskilful manufacturing industry of the Javanese, it generally excels that of the other islanders. The natives of Celebes and the people of Bali are the only tribes besides that may be called considerable manufacturers of cloth.

But to return to my narrative. Upon reaching the capital, we were visited by a *Bopartis*, or governor. This dignitary ordered us to remain on board until he had reported our arrival, and its purport, to the Rajah. That same night, however, he returned to the prahu, with orders from the Rajah to conduct us to his own house, within the *Kāraton*, until his highness should be pleased to grant Prabu an audience. But a few words about these buildings, for they are amongst the most notable of the antiquities of Java and the immediately adjacent islands.

These *Kāratons* (residences of princes) are, in fact, walled cities ;—the palace occupying the centre of the town, and being surrounded on all sides

by the habitations of the attendants, retainers, and followers of the prince and the members of his family. The empty spaces are occupied by the prince's gardens, and by tanks and ponds. The area is intersected by an endless labyrinth of walls, the whole being concealed, at any considerable distance, by a profusion of ornamental and fruit trees. The great approach to the Kāraton is to the north, and through a square or court of considerable extent, called the *alun-alun*, a constant appendage of every Javanese palace. It is in this open space that the sovereigns, once in eight days, in conformity to Oriental usage, show themselves to their subjects. Here all tournaments are exhibited; all public processions are formed; and here the retainers of the nobles wait, while the chiefs themselves pay their respects to the sovereign. A row of Indian fig-trees adorns the sides of the square; and in the centre, each surrounded by a wall, are to be invariably seen two great trees of the same kind, the space between which is that allotted for public executions. These trees, by the way, are considered almost sacred, and may be looked upon as remnants of Buddhism; for the Indian fig-tree is consecrated by the followers of that sect. Wherever they are found, even in the most desolate parts of the country, we are able to trace the palace or dwelling of some ancient chief or prince.

After passing through the great square, we arrive at the *Paseban*, a place shaded by a canopy, supported on pillars, and intended to afford temporary accommodation to the nobility while they await to be summoned into the presence. From the *Paseban*, a spacious flight of steps brings us to the *Sitingil*, a handsome terrace, in the centre of which is one of the usual *Pandrupa*. It is here the sovereign seats himself at all public festivals—occasions when a degree of barbaric magnificence is displayed, that approaches to those dreams of Eastern grandeur which the minds of Europeans imbibe from books, but which are soon dissipated by an experience of the tameness of the reality. From the *Sitingil* the visitor descends by another stair, parallel to that by which he has entered, and, by a variety of winding passages, is conveyed through a series of gates, and brought in succession to the different palaces of the prince, each dignified by pompous epithets, drawn from the copiousness of an exuberant language.

Well, it was in a spacious residence belonging to the Bopartis, in the Kāraton, that we found ourselves comfortably lodged and awaiting the promised audience. Upon the morning of the third day, as Prabu, my brother, and I were squatting upon our mats partaking the morning meal, we were aroused by the most terrible discord—howl-

ing of women and men. Martin and I ran to the verandah: the open space before the house was filled with people—not a stationary crowd, but a moving throng, all groaning, shrieking, and screaming as they passed along.

“What on earth is the meaning of all this?” said I.

“Whose chimney is on fire? you mean, Claud. I’ll be bound it is not anything much more terrible,” replied Martin, with a laugh, which, by the way, was forced; for afterwards he confessed that he had some notion of a rebellion and general massacre—no very uncommon occurrence in the East.

“God is great!” exclaimed Prabu; “some sudden calamity has happened,” and he left the house to inquire. We followed, and coming up to a bevy of men and women, shrieking, crying, beating their breasts and tearing their hair, asked them the reason of the noise.

“Siva hath visited the city with vengeance for its sins! Our mother is called away.”

“*Their mother!*” said the incorrigible Martin to me. “The old lady must have had a large family!” But Prabu, overhearing the words, said, quite seriously:

“Truly, sahib, she had a large family; nearly the whole people of Bali were her children, and to them she was a good mother.”

“What mean you?” I asked; “that the Queen is dead?”

“Alas! sahib, it is so: the good and heroic Ratu Wandan Savi died suddenly during the night.”

“And so spoiled our breakfast,” replied Martin.

“Shame, brother! Speak not thus flippantly of so serious a matter,” said I, angrily.

“Why surely, old Claud, you wouldn’t have me, a Christian, go howling and shrieking about the streets, like a half-tamed wild beast, for the death of a person I never saw! You might as well expect me to go into mourning for a Queen of the Cannibal Islands. But,” he added, seriously, “Prabu, tell us who and what was this Queen, whom you call both good and great?”

“Towards the latter part of his reign, the late Rajah, being at war with the Prince of Gelgel, suffered a great defeat; and notwithstanding the bravery of his son, the present Rajah, who commanded the army, would have lost his dominions, for the Gelgel Rajah had already invaded them; but his niece the Ratu, then a princess, presented herself before the troops accoutred as a warrior, spoke of the bravery of her ancestors, harangued them, distributed gifts, and put herself at their head. This reviving their courage and spirits, the soldiers fought like lions, and succeeded in destroying the invading army and taking the Prince of Gelgel and his family prisoners.”

“A plucky girl that!” said Martin—“a kind of Balinese Joan-of-Arc. Of course the Rajah married her; I would if I had been he.”

“The Rajah married her to his son, Sahib Martin,” said Prabu.

“A very proper promotion, too! I hope he deserved her.”

“He did: she has ever since been his chief wife and queen.”

“Well, that’s something, certainly; but if I had been the princess, I should have expected, after all I had done, to have been his *only* one. But, anyhow, it is a good story, if only for being the first I have heard in which the Dutch are not mixed up.”

“But *they were*, sahib,” said Prabu. “It was the Hollanders who incited the Prince of Gelgel to war against the Rajah of Billing.”

“Well,” cried Martin, at random—for he was, as it were, caught in his own trap—“thank Heaven, I am no Dutchman!”

“Allah be praised you are not!—for then Prabu could not have befriended thee, even at thy utmost need,” replied our companion. “But, sahibs,” he added, “the good Queen’s death happening at this time is especially unfortunate.”

“Why more at this time than any other?” I asked.

“Because, sahib, the Rajah will grant no audi-

ence until after the funeral, and that cannot, according to custom, take place in less than one month and seven days."

"Whew!" whistled Martin; "a pretty time to be cooped up here! How shall we pass our time?"

"Take to the woods or the river, and employ ourselves with our guns," I suggested; and so we did day by day, but for all that the time hung heavily upon our hands. As for Kati, Prabu sent him back to the prahu; for, for some reason unknown to us, he had no great faith in the honesty of the young chief Mahomed.

A few mornings after this, as my brother and I, accompanied by Prabu, were passing through the principal street on our way to the jungle, we encountered a procession that somewhat startled us—at least Martin and me. It consisted of twenty litters, in each of which sat a young woman attired in white, and accompanied by an aged attendant of the same sex. The appearance of the two was contrasted; for whereas the girls looked as joyful as if going to a wedding, the old ladies looked as dismal as if they were attending a funeral. There was also a band of musicians in the rear, playing a very lively air.

"Strange," I remarked, "that such doings should be permitted at a time of public mourning!"

"Sahib, these women are the chief mourners for

the late Queen : they were her slaves, devoted to her through life—they will accompany her in death. Yesterday, the whole of the Queen's women sought the Rajah, and earnestly, and in tears, besought his permission to accompany their mistress to the next world : from among the applicants his Highness selected these."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, with a shudder ; "I had forgotten they are Hindoos."

Of course my reader has heard of suttee or widow-burning, so long practised in our Indian Empire, but now, to a great extent, suppressed by the English Government. Well, that inhuman rite has never prevailed on the continent of India to the same extent as among the islanders, amongst whom, indeed, it is supposed to have had its origin.

When a prince or princess of the royal family dies, their women or slaves walk round the body, uttering cries and frightful howlings, and all begging to die for their master or mistress. The Rajah, on the following day, designates, one by one, those of whom he makes choice for the *privilege*, as had been the case with the twenty poor creatures in that procession. From that moment to the last of their lives, they are daily conducted, at an early hour, without the town, to perform their devotions, having their feet wrapped in white linen ; for it is no more permitted



to them to touch the bare earth, because they are considered as consecrated. The old women who accompany them are for the purpose of fanning the flame of their enthusiasm, and to keep them from wavering as the hour of death draws nigh. The night before the day of execution these poor creatures are made to pass in continual dancing and rejoicing, without being permitted to close an eye. All pains are taken to give them whatever tends to the gratification of their senses, and from the quantity of wine which they take, few objects are capable of terrifying their imaginations. Besides, their minds are inflamed by the promises of their priests, and their mistaken notions of the joys of another state of existence. How strongly this reminds one of the Aztec festival, in honour of Tezcatlipoca (the Mexican Jupiter), only in the latter the ghastly mockery of state and happiness was kept up by the victim for twelve months before he was butchered upon the sacrificial stone, to be afterwards served up, with the rarest of condiments, at the tables of the priests and nobles!

But if day after day, for the prescribed period of mourning, we were shocked at this procession, now that we knew its intent, how shall I describe our feelings at witnessing the sacrifices! But my readers shall judge for themselves. About noon, on the day appointed for the funeral, the procession started from the palace. First came the

twenty doomed girls, in the order according to their rank in the deceased's household, each in an elegantly-constructed *badi* or litter, bedecked with flowers, and followed by an aged woman, who would, from time to time, endeavour to fan the perhaps now dying flames of enthusiasm ;—then, priests, bearing roasted viands, rice, and betel-nut, as offerings to the gods, followed by musicians, playing triumphant tunes. So they moved onwards, until they arrived at the place of sacrifice. Here there were twenty scaffolds, in the form of troughs, each raised upon four poles, and edged in on two sides with planks. The victims having arrived, they were threec carried round a circle. After this, the sufferers were placed in troughs, which was the signal for the approach of a man and a woman to each : the former, snatching the flowers which bedecked the girls, held them above their heads with pieces of the offerings to the gods, which the women posted behind them snatched from their hands and threw upon the ground. Then a priest let loose a pigeon, *as an emblem that their victims' souls were on the point of taking their flight to the mansions of the blessed!* At this moment there was a solemn and mournful silence ; but amongst the victims, not a lip quivered, not a muscle moved ; but you could see the bosoms heaving beneath the white robes, and, I fancied, could hear the beating of their hearts.

There were wet eyes, and sobs, too; but it was from their relations in the crowd, whose natural affections could not be entirely subdued, even by these dire superstitions.

Suddenly, at a signal from the chief priest, four powerful men ran up to one of the victims, and divested her of all her garments but the sash; then two seized her arms, the other two her feet, so as to extend her form to its full length: a fifth drew his poignard. Simultaneously, the same terrible tragedy was being performed upon the other nineteen. But let me get over the sad story, made sadder by the mistaken heroism of these poor girls. During all this, none had their eyes covered. Some few, seeing the butcher draw forth his poignard, demanded it; receiving it in the right hand and passing it into the left, they respectfully kissed the weapon; then, having wounded their left arms, they sucked the blood, stained their lips with it, and made a point with the blood upon their foreheads. Then returning the daggers to their executioners, the latter stabbed them to the heart, and they died without a complaint escaping them. At this moment I felt my arm clutched convulsively—a slight shriek. Turning round, I saw that my brave joyous brother Martin had fainted with horror.

“Water, water!—for heaven’s sake, water, Prabu,” I exclaimed; but there was no necessity for such

a call. The people, the bystanders, who could look so cruelly, coolly upon that terrible scene, flocked around him, and, with the kindness of innocent natives, aided in restoring him.

“Claud, Claud,” he cried, coming to, “this is too sickly, too horrible! Let us go;” and, nearly as much overcome as himself, I led him away.

From hearsay, therefore, will I describe the rest of that horrible rite—even more horrible than those of the Aztecs; for among the latter the sacrifices were performed by priests, but in Bali by common executioners, who receive as a reward fifty pieces of copper money each.

After the death of the victims, their nearest relations present came forward, washed the bodies, and covered them with perfumed wood, in such a manner that the head alone remained visible. They were then placed upon the funeral pile and consumed to ashes.

About this time the body of the Queen—which, by the way, from a superstitious notion that it will cheat the devil (whom they believe lies in wait in the ordinary passage), had been brought from the palace through an aperture especially made in the wall—arrived at the funeral pyre. It was borne upon a superb *badi*, or litter, of a pyramidal form, consisting of eleven steps, and supported by a number of persons, proportioned to the rank of the deceased. At each side of the body were

seated two women—one holding an umbrella, and the other a flapper of horsehair, to drive away insects. Two priests preceded the badi, in vehicles of a particular form, holding each in one hand a cord attached to the badi (as if giving to understand that they were leading the deceased to heaven), and ringing with the other a little bell; while such a noise of gongs, tabors, flutes, and other instruments was made, that the whole ceremony had less the air of a funeral procession than of a joyous village festival.

When the body had passed the funeral piles arranged in its route, it was placed upon its own, which was forthwith lighted, while the chair and couch used by the deceased in her lifetime were also burned. The assistants then regaled themselves with a feast, while the musicians, without cessation, struck the ear with a tumultuous melody, not unpleasing. This festivity continued till evening, when, the bodies being consumed, the relatives returned to their homes, leaving a guard for the protection of the bones—those of the Queen only, for the rest were gathered up and thrown away.

The next day the bones of the Queen were carried back to her former habitation, with a ceremony equal in pomp to that of the preceding day: there they remained for a month and seven days. Each day a number of men proceeded to

the palace, with vessels of silver, brass, and earth, filled with water, and accompanied by a band of musicians and pikemen. There were also other attendants, carrying green boughs, the mirror, the vest, betel-box, and other domestic articles belonging to the deceased. Every day during the above period the bones were devoutly washed, after which, being placed in a litter, they were conveyed (accompanied by a similar retinue to that which had attended the corpse in its first removal from the palace) to a place called *Labee*, where they were entirely burned, and the ashes, being carefully collected in urns, were cast into the sea.

By the law of Bali, no woman or slave is *obliged* to follow this barbarous custom ; yet even those who have desired to submit to it and have not been accepted, as well as those who have not offered themselves, are alike shut up for the remainder of their lives in a convent, without being permitted the sight of a man. If any one should find means to escape from her prison, and is afterwards taken, her fate is instantly decided ; she is poignarded, dragged through the streets, and her body cast to the dogs to be devoured—the most ignominious form of inflicting death in that country. That, however, these unfortunate women do sometimes escape is evinced by the following anecdote, given by a Dutchman, who was sent as

ambassador from the Governor-General of Batavia to the sovereign of Bali : \*—

“ On the death of the reigning king, the who of his wives and concubines, sometimes to the number of a hundred or a hundred and fifty devote themselves to the flames. None of them are previously poignarded, a distinction confined to this occasion. As they are at such a time permitted to walk without restraint, it happened, at the funeral of the late King of Bali, that one of his women, as she was preparing to follow the example of her companions, lost her courage at the sight of the dreadful preparations. She had sufficient presence of mind, in approaching the bridge, to assume leave to withdraw for a moment on some common pretext, which being granted without any suspicion she betook herself to flight with all possible speed. The *singularity* of the circumstance, rather than any motive of compassion, saved her life, and gave her her freedom. Afterwards, she was seen daily at the public market selling provisions ; and although she was regarded by all persons of rank with the utmost contempt, she heeded neither looks nor words.

“ Another object of contempt among the Balinese and for a reason sufficiently singular, is the female slave to whose lot it falls to wash the dead body of her mistress, during the month and seven days before

\* *Histoire Generale des Voyages*, Tom. xvii.

the funeral rites. It is, in fact, for the performance of this task that her life is saved, and liberty afterwards given to her to retire where she pleases into the country to earn her livelihood."

The same writer gives us the following interesting account of the self-immolation of the princesses of the blood-royal:—

"At the funeral of the king's two sons, who died a short time before, forty-two women of the one, and thirty-four of the other, were poignarded and burnt in the manner above described; but on such occasions, the princesses of royal blood leap themselves at once into the flames, as did at this particular time the principal wives of the princes in question, because they would look upon themselves as dishonoured by any one laying hands on their persons. For this purpose, a kind of bridge is erected over the burning pile, which they mount, holding in their hands a paper close to their foreheads, and having their robe tucked up under their arms. As soon as they feel the heat, they precipitate themselves into the burning pit, which is surrounded by a palisade of cocoa-nut stems: in case their firmness should abandon them at the appalling sight, a brother, or other near relative, is at hand to push them in, and render them, out of affection, that cruel office.

"We were informed, that the first wife of the



younger of the two princes just alluded to, who was daughter to the king's sister, asked her father, who was Prince of Couta, whether, as she was but three months married, and on account of her extreme youth, she ought to devote herself on the funeral pile of her deceased husband? Her father, less alive to the voice of nature than to the prejudices of his nation, represented to her so strongly the disgrace she would, by preferring to live, bring upon herself and all her family, that the unfortunate young woman, summoning all her courage, gaily leapt into the flames, which were already devouring the dead body of her husband."

## CHAPTER XX.

### WE RETURN TO THE COAST, AND HEAR OF AN OLD ENEMY.

THE death of the Queen brought about a sad disappointment to Prabu, for, the day after those terrible rites, the Rajah caused it to be given out that he would give no audiences, nor, indeed, transact any kind of business, for the ensuing six months: nevertheless, he bore it with his usual coolness.

“God is great!” he said. “‘What is written is written.’ The Rajah is suffering under a great misfortune, and we must wait his Highness’s pleasure.”

“What!” exclaimed my brother. “Wait six months in this city of horror, with the ghosts of those poor murdered girls haunting us?—not I!”

“The Sahib Martin is as impatient as he is brave; but I shall not wait in this city. *No*—we will return to the coast with the Prince Mahomed’s ambassadors.”

Accordingly, we set out upon our return voyage

at early dawn on the following day, and reached Mahomed's domain without any incident worthy of record. We proposed to go on board the prahu the day after our arrival, but upon paying a farewell visit to the prince, so earnestly and kindly did he importune Prabu to remain his guest for a week or so, and so desirous was the latter of securing for his party as enthusiastic an ally in the son as he had had in the father, that he consented.

As for Martin, he was delighted at the arrangement; "for Claud," said he, "in a few days the heavy rains will fall, the tigers will be driven down from the mountains, and we shall have a chance of some good sport."

"Martin," replied I, "it would be better for us if we were safe on board the prahu. I don't believe in this young prince or chief, whichever he may be. His father was an unmitigated savage, but he was honest; the son's manners are so velvety, that, depend upon it, he means no good."

"What! You are at your witch-practices again, are you? Nonsense, old fellow! The truth is, you don't half like tiger-hunting; I do though, for it is plucky sport."

"Plucky! Well, Martin, I don't think so. Where is the pluck in, say, six, seven, or a dozen men, with as many sets of brains (any one being of superior quality to the tiger's), the same number of

long knives and rifles, which deal out death at a great distance, attacking one poor beast with no other weapons than its paws : an animal, too, possessing so little courage—notwithstanding all that tiger-hunters, to enhance their own deeds, say about it—that, like a cat or rat, it will seldom face a cool and determined pursuer if it can run away, without, indeed, it be goaded to madness by a bullet or so ? ”

“ I grant you, Claud, that the tiger is a coward ; for, instead of boldly facing its prey like the lion, it sneaks about the jungle, ready to fall upon the first unwary pedestrian or animal that may pass.”

“ Yes, as a cat upon a mouse ; but, like the cat, the tiger, if boldly faced and pursued by an animal, would run away ; and, surely, there is small courage in conquering a flying enemy ! ”

“ Then you mean to say there is no pluck in a man fighting a tiger ? ”

“ In *one* man fighting *one* tiger, perhaps ; but even then it requires more skill and practice with a particular weapon than courage ; for what chance has the beast against a double-barrelled rifle, in hands trained to its use ? But it is of your ordinary tiger-hunting I speak disparagingly—I mean as it is practised upon the continent of India by our vainglorious countrymen, who, on their return to England, write books about it to glorify their own courage.”

"Nevertheless, I hope we may have a choice of joining one of these hunts, Claud," said Martin.

"Possibly so ; and I, of course, shall accompany you ; but it will not alter my opinion, that the chances are not equal between the hunter and the hunted. Why, what does a celebrated writer say of tiger-hunting in India ?"

"I am sure I don't know, nor do I care," he replied, a little sulkily.

"Then I will tell you, if only to put a word in for the poor animal. He says: 'It is little better than killing cats ; nor are there so many risks attending it as in foxhunting. The sportsmen—and there are generally twenty of them, with twice that number of elephants, encaged in the howdahs, each having half a dozen loaded double-barrelled rifles, charged as fast by servants as they can be fired—are perched in the same security as if in a tree, deer-shooting. A mahout sometimes gets a scratch, but it is the noble elephant that bears the brunt of the battle, and everything depends on his sagacity, courage, and steadiness. If the elephant won't stand, becomes frightened, and goes off, then, indeed, the sportsman's life is in some jeopardy ; but this seldom happens, and even then the number and arms of the party are out of all proportion to the strength of a tiger or two.'"

"Oh ! bother, Claud, I wish you hadn't such a

good memory. But what has tiger-hunting in India to do with me—we are on the island of Bali?”

“Well, my position is even more strengthened by the practice in Java,” said I, which Martin knew; but as my readers may not, I will tell them how the Javanese hunt the tiger, that they may judge what chance the poor beast has in the contest:—

A vast circle of spearmen is formed round the known haunt of a tiger, which is gradually contracted, until the animal, hemmed in on all sides, is compelled to attempt an escape by rushing through the phalanx. In this endeavour he is commonly killed, through the number and dexterity of the hunters, and the formidable length of their weapons. “Among a great many exhibitions of this sort,” says an old resident in Java, “to which I have been witness, I never knew an instance in which the tiger was not destroyed without the least difficulty.”

The same writer gives us another proof of the disadvantage at which the tiger is taken:—“Among the Javanese, the most interesting animal-fight is that between the tiger and the buffalo. The buffalo of the Indian islands is an animal of great size and strength, and of no contemptible courage; for he is an overmatch for the royal tiger, hardly ever failing to come off victorious in the fight with him.

It must be confessed that there is no small satisfaction in seeing this peaceful and docile animal destroy his ferocious and savage enemy. Neither are possessed of much active courage; the tiger indeed, is a coward, and fights only perfidiously, or through necessity. On this account, it is necessary to confine them within very narrow limits, and, further, to goad them by various contrivances. A strong cage, of a circular form, about ten feet in diameter and fifteen feet high, partly covered at the top, is for this purpose constructed, by driving stakes into the ground, which are secured by being interwoven with bamboo: the buffalo is then introduced and the tiger let in afterwards from an aperture. The first rencounter is usually tremendous: the buffalo is the assailant, and his attempt is to crush his antagonist to death against the strong walls of the cage, in which he frequently succeeds. The tiger, soon convinced of the superior strength of his antagonist, endeavours to avoid him, and when he cannot do so, springs insidiously upon his head and neck.

“In a combat of this nature which I witnessed the buffalo, at the very first effort, broke his antagonist's ribs against the cage, and he dropped down dead: the buffalo is not always so fortunate. I have seen a powerful tiger hold him down, thrown upon his knees, for many seconds and, in a few instances, he is so torn with wound

that he must be withdrawn, and a fresh one introduced: in nineteen cases out of twenty, however, the buffalo is the victor. After the first onset, there is little satisfaction in the combat; for the animals, having experienced each other's strength and ferocity, are reluctant to engage, and the practices used to goad them to a renewal of the fight are abominable. The tiger is roused by firebrands and boiling water, and the buffalo by pouring upon his hide a potent infusion of capsicum, and by the application of a most poisonous nettle (*lamadu*), a single touch of which would throw the strongest human frame into a fever."

But I am digressing.

Now, although, as I have intimated, I had some suspicion that the young chief had no honest intentions towards us, I had no other reason than a certain forced courtesy and kindness of manner, which seemed unnatural, or at least out of place, in a nature so wild and ferocious. Yes, there was one other—viz. a certain cunning expression about his eyes and upon his lips, that I did not like. My suspicion, however, became confirmed, that at least there was something wrong somewhere, when I accompanied my brother and Prabu down to the prahu.

"How is this?" said Prabu to Kati, as we went on board—"lying at single anchor and the guns shotted! What do you fear?"



“Kati don't fear—he only take care. Be ready, case what might happen,” was the reply.

“Kati, my friend,” replied Prabu, laughing, “when left in command, thou art over-cautious, for what harm *could* happen to us in a friendly port?”

Kati's reply to this was to the effect that, a few days before, a Dutch grab had appeared off the coast, and that she had sent a boat ashore with two men in her; and that although both had landed, and, as he believed, visited the Chief, but *one* of them had returned to the grab. “The other,” he said, “is now in the Chief's house—what for is he there?”

“Truly,” said the captain, thoughtfully, “this may mean evil. I will question Mahomed. But is that your only reason for lifting one anchor and shotting the guns?” he added.

“No. The day after grab go away, the Chief come on board and admire prahu, but especially guns, which he look at with his eyes, as much as to say, ‘Should like to have guns, ship, and all.’ Then Kati say to himself, ‘S'pose Chief think same thing some night, he with his men come and run muck among prahu's crew, and then when Captain Prabu come back, if not kill him and young sahibs, easy for him to say prahu run away, or been stolen by rascal Dutchman.’”

“My faithful Kati, I do not blame you,” replied

Prabu, "for having such suspicions. You have acted bravely, but your fears are groundless. Why should this chief make us eat dirt? Did not his father swear eternal hatred to the Dutch, and friendship with their enemies?"

"But s'pose old chief honest, dat no reason young chief honest too—all son not like fathers. Then, if he hated Dutch, as he said when he took oath, what for he hab 'em in his house now?" he replied—adding, quaintly enough: "The noble Captain Prabu say Kati faithful; dat why he keep his eyes open when his master got his shut. It no good fasten door of cage when tiger got away."

Then, determined to put a word in, as Prabu seemed to have such a thorough conviction of the Chief's honesty, I said:

"Well, Kati, what think you of trusting ourselves tiger-hunting with this chief?"

"Think it no harm at all, s'pose sahibs keep eyes wide, wide open, and take six prahu's men with 'em—only," he added, with a glance full of meaning, "to help clear jungle; nothing else."

"Bother! we shall lose the tiger-hunt after all," exclaimed my brother.

"Better that than hunt with tigers for our companions, Martin."

"The Sahib Claud's words are not good—the Chief is our friend," replied Prabu, angrily. "Kati has frightened himself by conjuring up the shadow

of a demon ; but Kati, brave as a lion by himself, is all fear when his master's safety is concerned."

"Kati fears the anger of his good master more than the spears and creeses of a thousand Balinese chiefs," replied the faithful fellow.

"Hast thou intimated to one of the crew thy suspicions?" asked Prabu, sternly.

"Is it possible the servant could breathe to slaves that which was only for the ear of the master?" was the reply.

"Then," said Prabu, in kindlier tones, "Kati, my friend, thou hast done well, and thy master is not angered. Now, sahibs," he added, "we will return ashore."

"Truly, Prabu," said I, as we were walking towards the pandapa—wherein now, as upon our previous visit, we had our lodging—"thou art obstinate in thy faith in this Mahomed's honesty!"

"Who is Prabu, that he should doubt his friend and ally?" was the answer.

"Not even," said I, "when, at this moment—if Kati's story be true—he is harbouring a Dutch spy in his palace? For if this man were not a spy, why did the Chief not tell thee of his coming to the island?" At which Prabu became thoughtful for a minute, and then replied:

"True, the sahib has *some* ground for his suspicions, and I will ask the Chief who this man is,

and *why* he harbours him," he replied ; and he left us there and then, to visit the palace.

About two hours afterwards, however, he rejoined us, and seemingly in the best of spirits ; for, unusually with him at any time, he laughed heartily as he told us that the Dutchman, after all, was no Dutchman—indeed, nothing but a native soothsayer, who had obtained a passage to the island in the Dutch grab.

"But the Dutch grab, what business had she on this coast?" I asked, still doubtful whether the captain of that vessel might not have been in communication with the Chief to our future detriment.

"A trader only, who put in for wood and water. True, her captain desired to trade for bales of the native cloth, but the Chief dismissed him with the plea, that there was none in his territory fit for the market. Sahib, sahib," he added, laughing again, "poor faithful Kati has been frightened half out of his life by a Dutch trader, the natural curiosity of a young chief, and the landing in the island of a wen-necked hunchback."

"A what?"—"A *wen-necked hunchback!*" exclaimed my brother and I simultaneously, and starting as if stung by a venomous snake.

"A wen-necked hunchback," he repeated, quite coolly. "But why do the sahibs startle, as if a tiger had leapt forth from my mouth?"

"Prabu," said my brother, "is this hunchback a snake-charmer?"

"Allah only knows!"

"Have you seen him?"

"No—and if I had I could not tell, for, truly, men do not have their occupations written upon their foreheads."

"Can I see him?" asked my brother, knitting his brows, and clenching his hands together till the nails entered his skin. "Don't laugh, Prabu, again, for I am serious, and feel as likely to run a muck as one of your own countrymen."

"Let the Sahib Martin be patient till to-morrow, and perhaps he may see this man about the palace gardens," replied Prabu. "But why dost thou so desire to meet this poor wretch?"

"Because," replied my brother, "I shall then know whether he be the villain who robbed us of our cousin—nay, who perhaps hath murdered her."

"Pray Allah it may prove so, Sahib Martin," replied Prabu, also playing with the haft of his creese, and, rarely for him except under the greatest excitement, something of the ferocity of his race in his eyes, "for we will tear the whole truth from his heart."

"Prabu," cried my brother, starting from his seat, and taking our companion by the hand, "thank you—thank you for that speech;" then

sitting down again, he murmured, as tears ran down his cheeks—

“ Poor dear Marie ! ”

“ Poor dear young sahib ! ” said Prabu, deeply affected at my brother’s anguish, “ weep not, dear boy ” [this was the first time he had used such a familiar phrase] ; “ for be assured, if still upon earth, we will find her ; if— ” but he could not utter the word as he caught the expression upon Martin’s face—“ she shall be avenged.”

Need I say that our dreams that night were of

THE WEN-NECKED HUNCHBACK ?

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE WEN-NECKED HUNCHBACK, AND HIS REVELATIONS TO PRABU.

“THE wen-necked hunchback !”

As at night these words had been the last upon our lips, so were they the first in the morning.

“I will seek out this fellow at once,” said my brother.

“But *how*, Martin? It would be to look for a needle in a haystack ; for the house and grounds of the Chief Mahomed are well-nigh as large and intricate as those of the Rajah’s kāraton.”

“I will seek Mahomed himself, and beg of him to produce the rogue.”

“A bold notion truly, but not a wise one ; for if, as I suspect, he be here for Mahomed’s amusement, or, worse, as a spy or an ally in some secret scheme, such a demand would, in all probability, bring us a couple of creeses between our ribs. Besides, brother mine, we cannot be sure the fellow is he whom we seek ; for wens and

hunchbacks are so plentiful in these Indian islands, that it can be no uncommon occurrence to find them met together upon the same person—but here comes Prabu.”

“Prabu,” said Martin, as that personage joined us, “I am determined to see this hunchback, even if I demand him of the Chief Mahomed.”

“Is the sahib tired of his life?—it would be madness,” he replied hastily. “But,” he added, “it is not necessary; I have discovered where this man is lodged, and there must we seek him.”

“Where?” asked my brother, eagerly.

“In the second pandapa in the gardens, about a hundred yards to the back of the palace.”

“Let us hasten,” cried Martin, snatching up his creese from the floor.

“Nay, not so, sahib: we should have to eat dirt, for he is now with the prince, with whom, for some reason or other, he seems to have become a great favourite. Let us rest patiently till night.”

With great difficulty Martin curbed his impatience till nightfall, and then, guided by Prabu, we set out together for the gardens; these we entered by a small postern in the northern wall, which our guide had discovered by bribing one of the slaves.

“See,” said Prabu, pointing to a low building—through the chinks in the wooden wall of which



we could perceive the glimmer of a light—"that is the pandapa; but tread softly, be cautious, or he will hear our approach."

We crept stealthily to the boarding, and looked through a chink.

"The rascal!" muttered Martin between his teeth, and placing his hand upon the haft of his creese.

"Allah preserve us! He is at his incantations," exclaimed Prabu.

But let me explain to the reader what we saw. The place was lighted by the dirty yellow flame of an oil-lamp, placed upon a pedestal about three feet high. At the base of this, upon the boarded floor, squatted, with his legs crossed beneath him, a hunchback with a wen neck; but his face we could not see, for his back was towards us. He was intently watching the figure of a man wrought of wax, robed in yellow, the royal colour, and at the same time muttering some words, in a tongue I had never heard before.

"The dog!" muttered Prabu. "He is seeking to encompass the death of the Rajah by enchantment."

"Hush," I whispered.

Then he took, from beneath a black cloth lying near at hand, a human bone, upon which, with a preparation which seemed to me compounded of blood and charcoal, he proceeded to write a name.

"The dog—the dog!" again muttered Prabu; "it is the Rajah's name."

"Hush, hush, Prabu," I whispered. "Would to Heaven he would show his face, that we might be sure of our man!" Almost as I spoke my wish was granted: he arose, and turned towards us the but too well remembered features.

"Enough, Claud, it is he!" exclaimed my brother; and the next instant he had passed the threshold, and was struggling with his old enemy.

"Rogue—rogue! thou shalt not escape me this time," he said, as he clutched him by the neck almost to suffocation.

"Remove your hands, Martin," I cried; "you will kill him, and then we shall learn nothing."

"True," replied Martin; but as he pulled forth his pistol and held it to the hunchback's head, he said: "Nevertheless, he *shall* die, if he attempts to move from this spot without my permission. Now dog! thief!" he added, "if thou wouldst live another hour, answer three questions."

"Let the sahib put them: Huccuk will answer, if not forbidden by the demons," replied the old rogue, but with trembling limbs and chattering teeth;—at which, indeed, there was nothing astonishing, for he stood as it were in the centre of a triangle composed of two glittering creeses (Prabu's and mine) and a loaded rifled pistol.

"Is the girl whom you stole from Mynheer

Ebberfeld's house alive and uninjured?" as Martin.

"As I would save my worthless life, sahib, is both alive and uninjured."

"Good! Now tell me *who* instigated the crime. A demon, sahib."

"No trifling, thou rogue!" replied Martin savagely. "Don't answer me with your demon. I will send thee to sup with them."

"The gods forbid, sahib: it was a demon, demon who prompts all men to crime—poverty. Yes, Huccuk was starving, and he stole the bread that he might get bread."

"That is indeed candid, thou old rogue!" cried Martin. "Now tell me, to whom didst thou sell her?"

"To some wandering merchants."

"Villain," cried Martin, "this is false; else I knowest thou she is even now alive, unharmful and uninjured?"

"Sahib, the merchants who bought her, agreed to sell her to be the handmaiden of a princess."

"Now, thou rogue," said Martin, making the lock of his pistol click, "prepare to die, or answer me truly: Where is she now—where may we find her?"

The old coward trembled like an aspen leaf and he replied—

"Let the sahib have patience, while Huccuk

consults the demons—for this question he may not answer without their permission;” and then he buried his face in his hands, and began muttering, or, rather, making strange unearthly noises. The result was that in about five minutes, in bolder tones, he said :

“The sahib may take Huccuk’s worthless life ; the demons forbid his answering that question.”

“Enough, then—take the consequences !” cried Martin, passionately ; and he would have shot him there and then, but Prabu dexterously jerked the pistol in an upward direction.

“Your pardon, sahib, but Allah forbid that you should rob the public executioner of his fees, for already is this man’s life forfeited to the laws of Bali.” Then to the hunchback he said, “Well knowest thou this, O dog of a sorcerer and traitor !”

“Well does the miserable Huccuk know that the noble Prabu utters words of truth,” whined the hunchback.

“Ah !” exclaimed the captain, evidently greatly surprised, “then you know me ?”

“The descendant of the illustrious patriot Surapati is known to every native-born Javan—is it possible it could be otherwise ?”

“Dog !” replied he, sternly ; “if thou knowest me as *Prabu*, and as the descendant of the great Prince, thou also knowest that I will keep my

word. Thus, if thou discloseth the whereabouts of this girl, and we find her unhurt, unharmed, thou shalt be free to come and to go; if not, his Highness the Rajah shall take thee in his keeping."

"The noble Prabu hath commanded—the miserable Huccuk will obey; but the words must be spoken in his ears alone, for so have the demons willed it."

"Let us parley with the rogue no longer," cried Martin.

"Nay," replied Prabu, "if the sahibs would learn that which they so much desire to know, they must be patient; let them therefore withdraw for a time from the pandapa."

"And leave you alone with this fellow?" said Martin.

"Aye," replied Prabu, "for the dog hath more to fear from me than I from him."

"Prabu is right, we will await without." Then, taking Martin by the arm, he permitted me to lead him outside the building.

"That fellow will escape us yet," said my brother.

"Not so," I replied—"Prabu knows how to manage him better than either of us;" and so Martin was compelled to await the result.

After a close and whispered conference of half-an-hour, not one word of which could we catch, Prabu came forth from the pandapa.

“Well, where hath the rogue hidden our cousin?” we both asked, anxiously.

“Let the sahibs rest happy and contented—their cousin is safe and unharmed.”

“But where? How can you be certain of this?”

“Prabu hath said it: do the sahibs doubt his words?”

“No, no!” replied Martin; “yet I cannot—I cannot feel convinced! But, anyhow, that fellow shall not escape me until I have the assurance from his own lips;” and so saying, he dashed up the steps and through the doorway, but then gave such a wail of agony and despair, that, fearing he might have been suddenly attacked and wounded by Huccuk, I immediately followed him; but there he stood, now speechless with rage, for the hunchback had escaped.

“Claud, Claud!” he exclaimed, on seeing me, “even Prabu has deceived us—but bitterly shall he pay for it;” and as the latter came up the steps, I believe he would have attacked him had I not held him back.

“Martin, my brother, for shame! Have faith in Prabu still—he would never betray us so cruelly.”

“Give me, then, thou Javan dog!—give me, I say, my cousin or this hunchback!”

“Javan dog in thy teeth!” exclaimed the descendant of Surapati, savagely; then, with a smile, he added: “But the poor young sahib

Martin is mad with grief, and forgets that, for his uncle's sake, the *Javan dog* is to him the most faithful of animals."

"Well," hotly replied Martin, "the words were wrong—I retract them; I believe in you, Prabu; but—but I insist upon knowing where our cousin is hidden."

"Let the Sahib Martin have patience," was the quiet reply—"let him wait. Prabu, who would die fifty deaths rather than betray or deceive the nephews of the good Councillor Black, swears by the Koran, that the girl shall be delivered to them safe and unharmed. More than this he cannot, dare not, must not *now* say! Will the sahibs trust him?"

"Frankly will I," said I, shaking his hand; but Martin stood bewildered, and as if half-ashamed of his impetuosity, yet too proud to give in. It was, however, but for a moment; then, following my example, he took him by the hand, saying:

"Prabu, I submit; but, for Heaven's sake, lose no time in relieving me from this cruel suspense."

"The Sahib Martin," replied the other, "is again himself, and the joy of having his cousin restored to him will be sufficient recompense for his present sufferings. But, again, let me assure him that she is safe, for the hunchback would not have dared to deceive Prabu."

"But why should he not deceive you?—who

can believe one word from the lips of so great a rogue?" asked Martin.

"There are reasons that I may not now disclose ; but one I may. Having discovered him in the very act of sorcery, one word of mine would bring down upon him and his whole family, no matter how wide apart they may be, a dreadful punishment—for terrible are the laws of Bali ; and that word I promised should never be spoken if he could *convince* me, beyond all doubt, that the girl was safe and unharmed, and that he did—by what means, for the present, no matter ;" and with this explanation we were compelled to rest content, and so returned to our lodgings.

*Apropos* of sorcery, among those of the Indian islands not converted to Mahomedanism, it is regarded, as of yore in England, as the most atrocious of crimes, and punished accordingly.

"If," says the Balinese law, "a man falsely accuse another of sorcery, and speak publicly thereof, the magistrate shall fine him forty thousand." "If a person write the name of another on the winding-sheet of a corpse, or on a dead man's bier, or make images of another of paste, or, writing the name of a man on a slip of paper, suspends it on a tree, buries it in the earth, deposits it in haunted ground, or where two roads cross each other, any of these shall be deemed sorcery. If a man write the name of another on



a human bone, with blood and charcoal, this also shall be deemed an incantation. Whoever is guilty of any of these practices shall be put to death. If the matter be very clearly made out, let the punishment of death be extended to his *father and mother*, to his *children*, and to his *grandchildren*!—let none of them live!—let none connected with one so guilty remain on the face of the land, and let their goods be, in like manner, confiscated. Should the children or parents of the sorcerer live in a remote part of the country, still let them be sought out and put to death; and let their goods, if concealed, be brought forth and confiscated.”

This cruel custom of putting to death a whole family for the fault of one, reminds me of a similar custom among the Japanese, and which is sufficiently illustrated by the following historical anecdote:—

In the year 1638, the governor of a small province near Jeddo so oppressed the people, that the Tycoon ordered that he and all his relations should have their stomachs ripped open, as nearly as possible, at one and the same hour. He had a brother, who lived two hundred and forty-seven leagues from Jeddo, in the service of the King of Fingo; an uncle, who lived in Satsuma, twenty leagues further; a son, who served the King of Kinocuni; a grandson, who served the King of Massame, a hundred and ten leagues from Jeddo;

and at three hundred and eighty leagues from Satsuma, another son, who served the governor of the castle of Quanto ; two brothers, who were of the regiment of the Emperor's guards ; and another son, who had married the only daughter of a rich merchant, near Jeddo ;—yet were all these persons to be executed precisely at the same hour. To do that they cast up what time was requisite to send the order to the farthest place ; and, having appointed the day for the execution there, orders were sent to the Princes of all the places I have mentioned, that they should put to death all those persons on the same day, just at noon, which was punctually done. The merchant who had bestowed his daughter on that gentleman's son, died of grief, and the widow starved herself.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### WE JOIN A TIGER HUNT, BUT NARROWLY ESCAPE POISONING, AND ESCAPE TO OUR ISLAND.

THAT night the heavy rains commenced, and for three days we were kept within doors, for in those islands it literally "never rains but it pours"—nay, falls in torrents, which deluge the whole land. Neither was this seclusion rendered any the more agreeable, now that, having been assured of our cousin's safety, our minds were perpetually racked with curiosity as to her whereabouts, and Prabu's reasons for keeping it secret from us.

Thus, when the rains cleared off, and the Chief Mahomed invited us to join him and party in a tiger-hunt, we rejoiced—I, that activity would prevent my mind from preying upon itself—Martin, partly for a similar reason, but chiefly, that he was about joining in a sport of which he had heard so much, but seen nothing. As for Prabu, he, I believe, accepted the invitation out of mere politeness, and, perhaps, policy, hoping thereby to

secure the young Mahomed to the interests of the "Dutch-hating party." But, however that might have been, he must at last have begun to entertain some suspicions as to the Chief's honesty of purpose; for upon the morning of the hunt, he sent Martin down to the prahu, with orders to bring back a party of six of the best of the crew, armed with muskets and creeses.

Upon Martin's arrival with the small force, the Chief, who was standing in the midst of some ten or twelve of his vassals, all armed with creeses and boar-spears, looked very surlily; then, changing his tactics, he affected to praise the appearance of the men and their arms, but mildly suggested to Prabu, that for the sake of himself and crew, it would be as well to send them back to the prahu, as the sight of so many armed men might arouse the jealous fears of the villagers in the mountains. But Prabu, with equal simplicity or cunning, declared that there was no fear of their embroiling themselves with his subjects, for they were mild-tempered men, whom he could hold well in hand, and that, moreover, he had ordered them to accompany the party for his Highness's amusement and gratification—indeed, to show him what musket-practice would do among the tigers; adding, that, should his Highness approve it, he would, before taking his departure from his territory, present him with a case of arms. At which Mahomed testified

so much delight and good-humour, not to say apparent manly frankness, that even I began to think that my suspicions were groundless.

Well, all being prepared, we started, Mahomed leading the way into the interior, by following the windings of a small river—swollen, muddy, and rapid from the late heavy rains. Now, during the first five or six hours, Mahomed was both lively and jocose: as, however, time wore on, and we found no tiger's track, he became moody, and withdrew every now and then to hold a conference with two of his sub-chiefs; and this again arousing my doubts, I whispered to Prabu and my brother.

"Oh, bother with your suspicions and prophecies of evil, you old witch!" replied the latter; "he is only sorry because we have not yet been able to beat up a tiger."

"Sahib," replied Prabu, "there is no fear; for if Mahomed were to play us false, he would lose the muskets I have promised. It is as the Sahib Martin says: you will see how his eyes will glisten when we start a tiger."

After such expressions of confidence, what could I say?—nothing—and so we pursued our search for game for two more hours; but then, as we had reached a small village of bamboo huts, the Chief proposed that we should remain in one of them and refresh ourselves, while two of his attendants went to beat a neighbouring jungle.

As we entered this little village, an incident occurred that exhibited to the full the true nature of the Chief. A girl, very pretty for a native, ran across our path, and, stumbling against a tree-stump, fell at his feet. Conceiving this—albeit a pure accident—to be an insult to his dignity, Mahomed caught her up in one of his vice-like fists, and dashed her forward to a considerable distance, where she lay bruised and bleeding from a wound in the face.

“The cowardly hound!” cried I, in English; and running forward, followed by Martin, we picked her up, staunched the bleeding, and with kind words led her into the nearest hut, where we left her, with a face beaming with gratitude, and exclaiming, “Allah preserve the good sahibs!”

This interference—for so the Chief doubtlessly considered it—between him and one of his slaves, evidently much vexed him; and I could see, from the savage glare of his eyes, that it was with pain he restrained his anger. As soon, however, as we entered one of the huts, the cloud seemed to have passed over; for he began a lively chat as to our hunting prospects, which he continued until interrupted by the coming of the refreshments. At the very sight of these, even, Martin and I forgot his brutality; for our vision was then delighted with stores of the delicious mangosteen, and our sense of smell by the arrival of several small vessels of hot

well-milked coffee. Fortunately for us, the refreshing beverage was not drunk.

But now let me tell you how we were placed in that hut. I was reclining at full length, with my head resting upon a bamboo pillow, against one of the sides; the bamboos of which had shrunk from each other at least an inch, so that, when looking in that direction, I could see all that was doing without. My brother was in a similar position by my side—Prabu about the middle of the hut; and between us three and the door, with his face turned rather towards the exterior, sat the Chief upon a mat. This position he had taken, ostensibly, that he might the better communicate with his people, who, of course, were not permitted to sit in their lord's presence. With reference to the men, I may add that, while the attendants of Mahomed had seated themselves in a line immediately near the hut, our party from the prahu were placed at a short distance beyond them; but both parties were partaking, or about to partake, of their coffee.

Well, I had been in the position described three or four minutes, awaiting till the coffee had become sufficiently cool to drink, when, as my left hand rested against the bamboo, I felt a tickling sensation. Turning my head, I saw the girl who had been so brutally used by the Chief earnestly gazing upon me. "Sahib," she whispered in my ear, "not drink coffee; it kill. Young chief bad man."

The coffee was poisoned, then—there could be no doubt as to her meaning ; but how fearful were my sensations ! Martin had his cup at his very lips —there was no time for caution. In an instant I had snatched it from his hand, crying, “ It is poisoned ; we are betrayed ! ”

The Chief sprang up like a tiger-cat ; but Prabu, as if by instinct seeing through the whole conspiracy, dashed his own scalding coffee in Mahomed’s face. Then, with one blow of his creese striking him to the earth, he cried, “ Forward, forward, sahibs, to our own men ; ” and so astonished at this sudden muck were the Chief’s people, that we had passed the cordon and reached our own men, ere one of the former could get to his feet.

“ Those who have partaken of the coffee,” cried Prabu, “ are poisoned—we are betrayed ! Give the rogues a volley ! ” This order being instantly responded to by a deafening discharge of muskets, he added, “ Now run for your lives. Load as you go, for there are others at hand.”

And away we scampered helter-skelter towards the little river, never stopping until we had placed it between us and our pursuers ; for that they would follow we had little doubt.

“ By Jingo, old witch ! ” said Martin, as he stood wiping the perspiration from his forehead ; “ you are right again, and we have had a narrow escape.”

“ Have the men partaken of the coffee ? ” I asked.



The answer was in the affirmative, and that many of them had been attacked by sickness; but, thanks to the fright and excitement, it had proved innocuous to the system. It had not, in fact, had time to render the circulation torpid, or, indeed, we should all have been lost.

I now told Martin that we were indebted for our lives to the little native girl.

“Heaven bless her, then, for this great return for our small kindness!” he exclaimed. “But, Claud, what cowards are we to leave her among these wretches! Nay, even now it may not be too late. Let us return, run a ‘muck’ among them, and bring her off.”

“Very quixotic and useless, my dear brother; for she is in no danger, as none know who cautioned us, and, doubtless, she will keep her own counsel.”

“The Sahib Martin is possessed to propose such a thing,” said Prabu; “but forward, or by another route, one party may yet cut us off from the prahu.”

So onward we tramped, crossing and recrossing the winding stream, till we had reached within two miles of the late Chief’s town; then we dashed into the jungle, hoping by a short cut to reach the coast, and so perhaps, by keeping near the sea, get sight of the prahu. It was a heavy, toilsome march through mud, slush, and dense jungle; but at length we scented the briny air, at another time

disgusting from its impregnation of rotten fish and foul weeds, but now the odour was delicious to our nostrils, for it came from the sea. Then, when after hewing and cutting, as we dragged our wearied limbs through a prickly jungle of rattans, and obtained sight of the broad expanse of ocean, each man gave one leap—literally, a leap for joy—and fell upon the beach to rest.

“I would give half the fortune left to us by our uncle, Martin, to be once more safe on board the prahu,” said I.

“I wouldn’t, though—we are safe enough; the imps will never find us here,” replied my brother; but even while he was speaking, there arose a loud yelling on the town-side of the jungle, and at once every man was again upon his feet, musket in hand.

“We are lost!” I exclaimed, as the enemy, nearly a hundred in number, came rushing towards us.

“We have one hope,” said Prabu; “they have no fire-arms;” then, quick as thought, he settled upon a plan of defence. “Give them a volley, but let each man take a steady aim,” he cried.

This we did (there were nine of us in all), and with such effect that the Balinese stood as if paralysed at the sight of their dead and wounded countrymen. Then, when we had reloaded, Prabu told off my brother, myself, and three of the crew, and, pointing to a small wooded island about a quarter

of a mile out at sea, he bade us swim to it, but at the same time to preserve our arms and ammunition, as best we could, from the water. "Until the sahibs reach the island," he added, "we will keep the rogues from sending their arrows after them."

"To save our arms and ammunition," said Martin, "we must swim with one hand, holding the musket and cartridge-box in the other," and this we did; for, like the native islanders, we had learned to swim like fish.

Upon reaching the island, we saw that the Balinese, who had by that time recovered their self-possession, were now bearing down upon our comrades. The latter, however, who had formed in line, with their backs turned to the sea, let the enemy approach and discharge a shower of arrows—which, by the way, they received without flinching, or indeed harm; then sending a volley, which told as well as the former one, turned and, leaping into the water, made for the island. Now came our turn: the Balinese were about to follow our comrades into the water, but ere a foot had been wetted, Martin and I, by way of protecting the swimmers by a covering fire, sent a couple of leaden messengers in their midst, that made them yell and shout, till the very air seemed filled with their noise. But they were quieted, as far as action against us went, at least for the time.

“They have had enough of it for this day,” said Martin.

“True, sahib,” said Prabu, who with his men had just landed; “but at daybreak, the devils will be upon us by hundreds.”

“Then won’t we give them a warm welcome, that’s all,” replied Martin. But he added: “Sufficient for the hour is the evil thereof; so in the meantime, that we may have strength and pluck enough to meet them, let all of us but one snatch a few hours’ rest.”

“No,” replied Prabu, “that would not be wise—a sandbank must be thrown up for defence; the sahibs, however, may sleep three hours, when we will awaken them to keep watch while we sleep.”

“Very good, so be it,” said Martin. Then, with the aid of two or three of the men, we cut some branches and leaves from a large cocoa-nut tree, and erected a temporary hut; after which, lighting a fire at the opening, as a preventive against the foul vapours of the morass, we loaded our rifles, placed them carefully upon the earth, and stretching ourselves at full length by their side, fell off to sleep. I must add that, to relieve our heated and sore feet, we threw off boots and socks.

Now the toil and excitement we had undergone seemed to have a very different effect upon me to what it had upon my brother; for while he slept soundly, I was restless and wakeful—that is, I sup-

pose, I must have had what is called a cat's sleep. By the way, why a cat's sleep should be a synonym for wakefulness, I could never understand; for since those days I have had many cats, very fine sensible cats too, and by closely watching their habits, have ever found, providing they were properly and carefully brought up—*i. e.*, treated kindly and well fed—that they sleep quite as soundly, aye, and snore and dream too, as well as any alderman after a corporation dinner.

But to return to my sleep that night: it must have been very restless, for at a slight rustling noise, I became wide awake, and, gently raising upon my arm, and looking towards my brother, a myself cold shudder ran through my frame; for, by the light of the fire, I saw a great serpent crawling towards him.

The slightest noise would have caused the reptile to attack him, while it was just possible that, as Martin lay motionless, it might pass over him without injury. "For possibly," I thought, "it has been aroused from a state of torpor by the heat of the fire, which it is evidently making towards." Thus with breathless anxiety I watched it advance. It crawled across his legs, its head was upon his naked feet—and my heart seemed in my mouth. I felt inclined to snatch up my rifle—but no. Providentially, I had sufficient presence of mind to resist the temptation, and in another

instant it had passed out of the opening, and I could have cried for joy. But then it occurred to me that it might attack one of the sleepers without; for some of our men, I knew, must by this time have lain themselves down, for a yellow streak in the horizon told me it could not be far from daybreak.

This was enough. I jumped up, and, taking my rifle, followed the serpent. It was still gliding onwards, but, hearing my footsteps, it erected its crest and turned around. There was now no alternative; in an instant the contents of my rifle were in its head. But, simultaneously, a man sprang upwards, and then fell heavily backwards as if shot.

"Great Heaven!" I exclaimed, "I have killed a man!"

Not so, however, for again he arose with a cry of "Malik,—they are coming," doubtlessly believing that the Balinese had landed; and in a minute, Martin, Prabu, and the whole of our party were by my side.

By way of excuse for alarming them, I pointed to the snake, still writhing in the agonies of death.

"But," exclaimed Prabu, "the sahib is frightened at nothing—he has wasted powder and ball upon a mere worm. Look," he added, "this is how to kill them," and he stuck a boar-spear through the head of the still writhing reptile; then, winding the body round the handle, he tossed it to one of the

men, telling him to roast it for the morning's meal. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding Prabu's contemptuous manner and remark—and which, as he afterwards confessed, he only assumed, to hide his chagrin that the whole party had been alarmed at the mere killing of a snake—the reptile was of a species whose bite is mortal; and that, too, my brother knew full well, for as we kept watch that night, while the rest of the party slept, he said—

“ Claud, dear old boy, Prabu's out of temper—never mind what he says; for to your wise old head, that kept you from alarming the snake, I owe my life.”

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A FIGHT: A GREAT PERIL AND A TIMELY RESCUE.

As day broke we examined our position. The island—which had in all probability, at some distant period, formed a promontory of the mainland, until cut off by the channel which now divided it from the shore—appeared to be about three miles in length by two in breadth. To the right, to the left, to the back of us, the shores were belted with groves of the cocoa-nut and gomuti palms; but the shore opposite the mainland was sandy and bare, excepting that nearly to the water's edge were scattered the trunks of huge palms—which, by the way, our commander in the night had ingeniously converted into buttresses for the sand-banks—or in military parlance “earthworks”—they had thrown up, and which were about breast-high.

As the sun rose in the horizon, we saw the Balinese, at least a hundred of them, bustling to and fro, shaking their spears and creeses in de-



fiance, and could hear their yells of anticipatory triumph.

"They are preparing to attack us, Martin ; see, they have a couple of boats. Let us arouse Prabu," said I.

"Aye, Claud, but look—they have observed us; down with your head," and scarcely had he uttered the words when a shower of arrows came flying through the air—the greater number of which, however, found their billets in the earthworks.

"Come, Martin, let us call Prabu."

"No, not yet ; every minute of rest is an object, with such work as we have before us for the rest of the day. Let us tackle them between us. But look—the two boats have put off. Bring your rifle to your shoulder and take a steady aim at one, while I take the other; for it would be uncivil not to acknowledge the receipt of the feathered messengers they have just sent."

Well, a steady and deliberate aim, and from across the water we could hear the dull thud—thud of our bullets, as they struck the sides of the boats.

"Anyhow," cried Martin, "there is a couple of loopholes in their sides, but that is not enough. Again, Claud, but this time an inch or two higher;" and once more we fired. The reports of our pieces aroused Prabu and the men, who

came towards us, shouting "Malik, Malik!—they are coming, they are coming!"

"Are they, though!" exclaimed Martin—"not a bit of it; at least not until they have put into dock again to stop the shot-holes in their sails and boats." And Prabu, at first angry that we had commenced action without orders, no sooner saw the telling effect of our well-directed fire, than he cried out—

"The sahibs are heroes—let them keep their rifles pointed at the boats," and then he employed himself in posting his little force, with their muskets, at angles of the works; so that while we, with our long-range rifles, harassed the enemy, Prabu and his party could, by a cross-fire, deal out destruction to any who, after the habit of their race, might take to the water—which, as it was then low tide, was not more than breast-high.

For a couple of hours, however, we had but little employment, save discharging a bullet now and then among stragglers, who from time to time ventured to the edge of the water, for the purpose of sending an arrow or two at any head that might chance to appear above our sandbank. As for the two boats, they had long since been lugged ashore, their crews not a little scared that a bullet could be sent among them from so great a distance; for it was, in all probability, the first time the deadly rifle had been heard by them.

But the brave Balinese will get accustomed to any weapon, however terrible at first, and so speedily the boats were again manned, but this time their crews, all but two rowers in each, laid themselves at the bottom ; and at the same time that they put off, some eighty of their comrades, armed with bows, arrows, spears, and creeses, took to the water—in order, I suppose, to create a diversion, for the latter were equally divided into parties and placed at each side of the boats : thus, shrieking and yelling, they advanced towards us.

As before, Martin and I kept our eyes upon the boats ; but so well and gallantly did their crews manœuvre them—keeping them for ever moving, twisting and whirling them about in the water—that they became as difficult to hit as seagulls on the wing in a tempest : we fired and fired, but all in vain. In the meantime, Prabu and his men had stood at their posts without firing a shot, and a well-planned manœuvre it was ; for as the yelling, screaming enemy—having exhausted a considerable portion of their strength by their toil in the water, and the frequent discharge of their arrows (you must remember that they stood breast-high in the sea)—came near the shore, one-half kept firing and the other loading, and that with such good aim and rapidity, that in about an hour, all who were not killed beat a retreat to the mainland.

But while this had been going on, Martin and I had been engaged keeping the boats, which, daringly enough, had run right beneath the works, from landing their crews: one of these we managed to scuttle by pouring bullets into her, and her few remaining men swam back to the opposite shore; but the other, in spite of rifles and muskets, set her crew ashore.

Had they effected this an hour before, when their comrades were finding full occupation for Prabu and the men, we should have been hopelessly lost. But now the latter, throwing aside their muskets and drawing their creeses, sprang to our aid, and drove them back to their boat—all but one, and he, Martin and I carried a prisoner into the interior.

The enemy being thus beaten back, we began to take stock of our ammunition: the result was pitiful.

“Not half-a-dozen rounds each man,” cried I.

“We must reserve them for our utmost need, and take to our creeses and the butts of our pieces,” said Prabu.

“Aye, aye,” said Martin; “it will come to a hand-to-hand fight soon, and then we shall be beaten by mere numbers.”

“Would to Heaven Kati and the prahu were near!” I exclaimed; and I must admit that, at the prospect before us, we became gloomy and

thoughtful. My brother, however, who was seldom at a loss for expedients, suddenly exclaimed, as a bright thought occurred to him :

“I have it! We will re-rig that scuttled boat, and one or two of us can put out to sea in search of the prahu.”

“Good,” said Prabu, “and we may yet be saved; for she must be somewhere at hand upon the coast.”

“I have another notion,” cried Martin; “we will examine our prisoner.”

“To what purpose?” I asked.

“Oh! you will see,” he replied, and we had the man brought before us.

“Now,” said Martin to him, “we are going to hang you up to one of those palm-trees.”

“God is great! What is written *is* written: the sahib has his servant’s life in his hands,” replied the man—who, like the greater portion of Mahomed’s subjects, was a Mussulman.

“Well, that’s cool,” replied Martin; “but,” he added, “will you honestly answer any questions I may put to you, if we promise to save your life?”

“Sahib,” he replied, “a dead man is of no use to his family.”

“No,” interrupted my brother, laughing; “that is a fact, no doubt.”

“Then, by the head of the Prophet and my

hopes of Paradise, I will answer the sahib truly."

"Is your rascally chief, Mahomed, dead?"

"Sahib, no, but severely wounded, yet not so badly that he cannot direct the attacks upon you here."

"Why did this young chief, the son of a man so friendly to us, seek to encompass our deaths so treacherously?"

"Because, while the sahibs and the Captain Prabu were in the capital, a Dutch ship came whose captain offered him a great reward in silver, as also the prahu, its guns and cargo, if he would deliver into his hand a certain Captain Prabu."

"But why did the Dutch want the Captain Prabu? what harm has he done them?" asked our leader himself.

"Because the great Dutch chief who rules at Batavia knows that Prabu is a descendant of the prince Surapati, and also that he has been sailing about the island, and on the coast of Java, to invite the different chiefs and princes to rebellion against the Dutch."

"The dog!" exclaimed Prabu, "but how can this be? is it possible a son can disgrace a father's memory, for did not the late chief hate the Dutch, and with his son swear eternal war against them?"

"He did, sahib, but Mahomed loves honour and

his country less than gold and power ; besides, the Dutch governor has promised to make him Rajah of Billing in place of the present Prince, who he fears—nay *knows*—is his enemy.”

“How *know* they this ?” asked Prabu in alarm.

“Mahomed has sent a messenger to the governor of Batavia, telling him.”

“But where is the Dutch grab ?” asked Martin.

“At the mouth of the Straits of Bali, awaiting the return of the prahu either to receive prisoners, when Mahomed has taken them, or to waylay the prahu in case she should escape from Mahomed.”

“But the prahu, know you where she is ?”

“Almost within gun-shot, riding at single anchor, about two leagues from the town.”

“Now,” said Martin, sternly, “we are going to send the boat in search of the prahu ; we will keep you here till its return, when if we find you have spoken falsely, you shall be hanged like a dog.”

“If, oh Sahib ! thy servant hath spoken falsely, let him die the death of a dog ; but, if truly, let him live.”

“A bargain !” cried Martin ; and so the conference ended, to the satisfaction of all parties.

When, however, the boat had been made seaworthy, there arose a dispute between my brother, Prabu, and me, as to who should undertake the somewhat dangerous service of seeking the prahu. Indeed, we could only settle it by casting lots,

when the duty fell to my brother, who thereupon left the island by the wooded side, taking with him his rifle, all the ammunition we could spare, and some fruits.

The remainder of that day we patiently awaited another attack, but it came not. The Balinese contented themselves with keeping watch along the opposite shores—a matter, by the way, of small consolation to us, for it was evident they were only awaiting reinforcements from the interior, and, in all probability, fresh boats, and should these auxiliaries arrive before the coming of the prahu, we were hopelessly lost. Then, again, now that the excitement of the fighting was past, our men lay about in all directions in a state of exhaustion, with no other refreshment than the fruits of the cocoanut-tree and the *gomuti* palm; indeed, but for these two edibles, we should have died from mere exhaustion, as between them they afforded us both meat and drink. Apropos of the latter, it is not only one of the most singular members of the vegetable world in the Indian islands, but adapted to such a variety of uses, that my readers may fairly excuse me for giving them a description of it.

The *gomuti* (*Borassus gomutus*) is the thickest of all the palms, but shorter than the cocoanut. The fruits, which are about the size of a medlar, and of a triangular form, grow from the shoots of



fructification on long strings of three or four feet, and that too in such abundance, that the quantity depending from a single shoot is more than a load for a man. The fleshy outer covering affords a juice of so highly stimulating and corrosive a nature, that, when applied to the skin, it occasions great pain and inflammation. Then, from the interior of the fruit, the Chinese prepare a sweetmeat, and the Indian islanders distil a spirit or toddy, which they use upon going into action, and which excites them in such a degree, that the Dutch not inappropriately denominate it *hell-fire*. This is the principal production of the gomuti palm, and it is extracted in the following ingenious manner :—

One of the shoots of fructification is, on the first appearance of fruit, beaten for three successive days with a small stick ; the shoot is then cut off a little way from the root, and the liquor which pours forth is received in pots. One palm will, at the age of nine years, yield for two years at the average of three quarts a day. From this liquor, again, a sugar is made by boiling it to a syrup, and is sold in all the markets. The Chinese also use it in the composition of the celebrated Batavian arrack.

Another production of great value, and which resembles black horse-hair, is found between the trunk and branches, in a matted form, interspersed

with long, hard, woody twigs of the same colour. When freed from the latter, it is used for any purpose of cordage. The small twigs found in the hair-like material are used by all the tribes who write on paper as pens, and for the manufacture of the poisoned arrows, which are blown from tubes. Beneath this hair-like material is found a third species, of a soft gossamer-like texture, which is used by the Chinese in large quantities as oakum in caulking the beams of ships, and as tinder for kindling fires. Lastly, like the true sago-palm, the gomuti affords a medullary matter, from which a farina is formed, and which is used throughout Java in considerable quantities.—But to resume my story.

Hour after hour having passed without bringing an attack from the Balinese, I began to entertain some hope that the severe loss they had already sustained from our fire-arms, but more especially the rifles, had so sickened them that they would make no other attempt—at least until we had been reinforced by the prahu. These hopes, however, were dissipated when, at the dead of night, as I lay stretched across our earthworks with rifle in hand, I heard a confused noise, a splashing in the water, and saw torchlights dancing among the trees on the banks. Having awakened Prabu, he watched and listened for a few minutes, and then said :

“They have been reinforced from the town, Sahib. They have horsemen among them; I can hear the trampling of their hoofs—nay, listen, that was the neighing of a horse!”

“True,” I said; for I had distinctly made out the same sound.

“They have *boats*, too,” he continued. “They intend attacking us under cover of the darkness of the night, believing thereby they will avoid our rifles and musketry.”

“Just my opinion, Prabu. I will send a bullet among them to let them know we are prepared. If it knocks over one or two, it may deter them from coming, as they will have proof sufficient that the darkness is no great protection.”

“No, no, Sahib, not one charge must be wasted. They shall approach, aye, to within a dozen yards of the shore, for you will see that each boat will hold two or three men with torches, which will be lighted only as they are about to land and fall among us like so many demons.”

Prabu then posted the eight of us, including himself, along the earthworks, at intervals of about a dozen yards.

“Speak not a word, move not a limb, till you hear the report of my piece; then, taking a cool, steady aim, fire!”

With what breathless suspense I stood, with my rifle just resting upon the breastwork, endeavour-

ing to peer through the darkness, for now there was no torch-light to be seen ashore. For an hour this lasted—no sound save the rustling of the wind or the gentle lashing of the waves—when there came upon my ears a slight dull noise as of the dipping of muffled oars. Prabu must also have recognised it, for, stepping softly along the little line of men, he whispered his orders.

“Steady! they are coming! Fire not till you hear the report of my piece.”

Then all was silent—motionless as death. The invaders had rested upon their oars, the better to prepare themselves, perhaps. But a few minutes, and again the sound of measured strokes. They appeared near, nearer, still nearer; then a whispered word of command, followed by the click, click of flint and steel, and six or seven torches were blazing and exposing to view the swarthy bodies of our opponents. It was enough—the loud sharp crack of the rifles of Prabu and six others was followed by a howling as from a thousand demons—a noise one could scarcely have imagined out of pandemonium. Each shot must have told, too; for the but recently advancing boats immediately fell back into the middle of the channel, and their crews extinguished the lights.

“Marvellously well done! After that they won't return to-night,” said I.

“Sahib,” replied Prabu, “reload—be prepared; they will be here again directly.”

Prabu was right. Again and again they came, and each time with greater desperation, for we could only drive them back by firing volley after volley; but at length our exertions were rewarded, for they were driven back to return no more that night—at least so we hoped.

“Thank Heaven!” I exclaimed, “morning is not far off.”

“Too far off, I fear, Sahib,” replied Prabu, “to be of use to us when it does come, for we have *but one charge each left!*”

“A fearful position, truly!” I replied. “Would to Heaven the prahu were at hand! What *can* we do?”

“They may not come again to-night—but they *may*; therefore let us remain at our posts, and reserve fire this time until they have left their boats—then a volley, and then—”

“What!” I asked, as the perspiration ran down my forehead.

“That will be the end,” he replied, quite coolly; “for all we can do then will be to die, with musket and creese in hand.”

“A pretty prospect!” I thought. Nevertheless, I had one consolation—my brother Martin would escape; yet how bitter would be his sorrow at our defeat and my death. There was little time, how-

ever, for such reflections, for suddenly there fell upon our ears a sound as if from mid-channel—click, click, click—and the darkness became illumined by a hundred torches, which as many savages held above their heads, so rendering them hideous beyond comparison. The click, clicking was explained ; it had been caused by their flints and steels.

“What means this manœuvre ?” I cried.

“We shall soon be dead men. It only remains for us to give them a well-aimed volley when they touch the shore. But down, down, all of you between the breastwork !”

The order was indeed seasonable, for between every two of the torchbearers stood a man with a strung bow, and scarcely had we ducked our heads, than a shower of arrows fell among us ; to which our men, now that there was no necessity for silence, sent back a yell of defiance. Then came another and another flight, and with such rapidity that, had we possessed fifty rounds of ammunition, we could not have used them to advantage. All that we could do now was to remain kneeling behind the sandbank, reserving our fire for one good, if but last, opportunity of making each shot tell. The Balinese seemed to understand our position, for we could hear them advancing through the water, yelling and shouting. They were terrible sounds, the more so as

they were to us symbols of approaching death ; but I had "screwed my courage to the sticking point," not with any hope of preserving my life, but resolutely determined to die bravely. Onwards they came—still onwards ; the boats, which were now in front of the line with torches and arrows, were grazing the shingles when Heaven itself seemed to have sent its thunder to our aid, in the booming of guns. This was followed by shrieks, yells, and a heavy splashing in the water. Then came another, and another boom ! and by three red lights at the mouth of the channel we could see that help was at hand, for they hung from the prow and masts of the prahu.

"Allah be praised !"

"Thank God ! it is Kati."

And as gun after gun was fired—clearing the water of our foes—the gallant little vessel ran up the channel. Then, lighting our torches, we clambered up the sides of the prahu, and were speedily embracing Kati and my brother.

"By jingo ! Claud, old fellow, how lucky ! we were but just at the nick of time," said Martin.

"Indeed, you have saved our lives by a minute," replied I.

"It was the great guns, Claud. Did I not tell you they were meant for fighting, and at last we have proved it."

"But where did you find the prahu, Martin ?"

“Oh, riding smartly away in a cove, out of sight of that Dutch grab, which, by-the-bye, Prabu, is upon the look-out for us. I wanted to fight her, but old Kati wouldn't have it.”

“We will give her plenty of sea-room as soon as possible,” answered Prabu ; and then, giving orders to run round the coast towards the province of Japan, at the eastern extremity of the island, we—that is, all that had been fighting upon the island—proceeded to regale ourselves with the best of Kati's stores.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### WE LAND AT MOJOPAHIT, AND ARE IMPRISONED AS REBELS.

BEING forced far out of our intended course by the Dutch grab, and along the coast of those provinces of Java, known to be ruled by chiefs or princes in the interest of the European Government, Prabu, in fear that a general description of the prahu might have been sent to the latter, ordered his crew to set about disguising the vessel with all speed. This they did by re-painting her a totally different colour, from stem to stern ; hewing down one of the masts, so that she should have *one* instead of *two*, and altering, in a very artful manner, the character of her rigging. As for Martin and me, he recommended us to blacken our teeth, and colour our skins to the mahogany hue of the natives. Thus, with the addition of donning the scant attire of the island seamen, we had soon become undistinguishable from them, except, indeed, we should happen to be very closely scrutinized by an European.

Well, we had run through the Straits of Bali, and rounded Cape Sedano—the most easterly promontory of Java—and had nearly made the entrance to the Straits of Madura, when we fell in with a hurricane, that so knocked us about that we were compelled to put into the first harbour, without mast or rudder, in fact, a mere hull, and that, too, with holes in her, that required incessant working at the pumps. To make matters worse, that port was near Mojopahit, once the seat of empire of the ancient Buddhist Sultans of Java, but now governed by a chief whom Prabu believed to be a firm and fast friend of the Dutch Government.

“This is jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire with a vengeance,” said I, as some of the native authorities ascended the sides, to inquire who and what we were, and for what purpose the prahu had put into that harbour.

“We must brazen it out,” replied Martin. “As for you and me, Claud, since we have turned mahogany colour, the best thing we can do will be to say nothing, and look as savage as we can. It is a pity, though,” he added, with a laugh, “that we are not a little uglier and shorter, then they wouldn’t know us from their own brothers.”

Prabu’s reply to our visitors’ queries was, that he was a Batavian merchant of the lower town, who, having been to Singapore with birds’ nests, had

taken in a cargo of cloth at Bali, and was then running round the coast to Samarang upon the north coast ; and with this they appeared satisfied, but declared they could not allow him to refit without he first obtained the Chief's permission. " Will my elder brothers, then, carry a message to the Chief ? " asked Prabu.

" No, that they could not do, but they promised, however, to come the next morning, and conduct him to the feet of his lordship ; " and with this—although a personal interview was sorely against his inclination—he was compelled to rest content.

Accordingly, the next morning, in anticipation of their coming, Prabu dressed himself as elaborately and as handsomely as his wardrobe would permit ; indeed, we were astonished that he had on board such fine linen, gorgeous sarongs, handsome turbans, jewelled-hafted creeses, and golden rings and bracelets—enough, indeed, to attire the whole three of us, for we were to accompany him, to swell his state, as his two chief officers ; we were however no longer surprised at all this finery, when he told us that the people inhabiting that portion of the island had, from all time, been noted for their love of show, and that, without it, they would treat strangers with derision, and their requirements with contempt.

By the way, the old traveller, Captain Dampier, gives a humorous illustration of the importance

attached to mere dress by the Indian Islanders generally :

“ Among the rest of our men,” says he, “ who used, when on shore ‘to dance with the Chief and his people, was one John Thacker, who was a seaman bred, and could neither read nor write, but had formerly learned to dance in the music-houses about Wapping. This man came to the South Seas with Captain Harris, and getting a good quantity of gold, laid some of it out in the purchase of a very handsome suit of clothes.

“ The Chief—supposing by the richness of his attire and the quality of his dancing, that he must be some person of consequence—asked one of Thacker’s companions if he were not of noble birth.

“ ‘ Your lordship is much in the right,’ replied the seaman, who was interested in carrying on the deception ; ‘ and most of our ship’s company are of the like extraction, especially all those who have fine clothes ; for, having money enough to bear their own expenses, they have come abroad just to see the world. As for those men your lordship sees with mean clothes, why they are only common seamen.’

“ This impudent falsehood had the desired effect upon the native Prince, who thenceforth treated John Thacker with the highest consideration. Unfortunately, however, the Captain was not fond of

practical joking, so that when it came to his ears, he not only undeceived the Chief, but caused a sound drubbing to be administered to the pseudo noble."

At the appointed hour, we were conducted to the Chief's palace, and were at once introduced to the hall of audience, a large building, with open sides, the roof of which was handsomely carved, ornamented with vermilion and gold, and rested upon numerous pillars. The Chief received us very graciously; and having obtained satisfactory replies to the many questions he asked, listened attentively to Prabu's requisition to be permitted to refit his vessel, and at once signified his acquiescence. But, as we were about taking our departure, there arose a great commotion at the entrance end of the hall, and presently several officers of justice appeared, bringing with them two men, both kicking and struggling to release themselves, like refractory school-boys. Of course we stepped a little forward to ascertain the cause of their apprehension. The one was a Javanese, the other a Chinaman. At the sight of the latter, I startled not a little, exclaiming, "By Jove! Martin, here is that rascal To-ki again."

"The rogue! so it is," he replied. But Prabu also recognised him.

"The dog," said he, "was formerly on board my prahu, but he fled one night when we were in

harbour at Batavia, carrying with him all the dollars upon which he could lay his hands." Hence, thought I, the reason of his trembling in that cave at the very name of Prabu.

But now commenced one of those scenes so characteristic of the courts of the native chiefs.

A woman of venerable aspect, but bent with age and overwhelmed with grief, came forward, and, falling at the feet of the chief, with clasped hands, said boldly, as is the wont of the Javanese in such cases, "Justice, oh! my lord, I demand justice. I have been foully wronged. I will not submit to it! Justice I ask upon the head of this villain Chinaman, for last night he waylaid and slew my boy, my only son, the prop of my numerous years, the staff of my existence!"

This charge having been corroborated by several witnesses, beyond all doubt or hope of dispute, one of the officials, turning to To-ki, cried:

"Thou hast heard the charge. What, oh! dog of a Chinese, hast to say to our lord the chief in reply?"

"The words of the miserable To-ki, whom the gods have deserted, will be few, oh, dread lord and chief," he replied, in a whining tone. "It is true, but it is also true that the wretched To-ki entered this city, poor,—starving; and in an evil hour fell in with this dog of a Javanese, who offered thy slave, oh! my lord, a sum in silver, to rid him of a

rat of an enemy ; and it is also true that the miserable To-ki could not resist the temptation."

Then the Javanese being asked what he had to say, replied, "Am I not known, my lord, as a peaceful trader, and of good repute? is it then possible, under heaven, that thy slave could have been guilty of so great a crime? It is not so, oh! my lord, for upon the features of this man, thy slave never set eyes, until this day. "Surely," he added, quite innocently, "this dog of a Chinese, son of a burnt mother that he is, entered the city as a robber and a slayer of men—but, having been detected in the crime, places it at the door of the first innocent man."

The chief having listened very attentively to these different statements, gave his decision that they were both guilty—

The Chinese, of having slain the man ; and the Javanese, of instigating the crime. To-ki being a poor man, who could not pay his way out of the consequences of his crime, he sentenced to lose his nose and ears ; while the Javanese was ordered at once to set aside a sum of money to keep the aged mother for the rest of her days, and to lose his two ears : a sentence which the man took quite coolly—but then he was rich—a fact that materially modifies sentences in Java. "It is a common custom," says an old traveller, "to bargain with the executioner for

mitigating the punishment: there is never a day but the chief orders a nose, eye, ear, hand, or foot to be cut off from somebody or other; and, upon these occasions, the executioner gets money for doing his business handsomely, and with little pain: for, if the criminal does not come up to his price, and pay him in ready money upon the spot, he will cut the nose, for instance, so deep, that the brain may be seen through the wound, or mangle a foot or a leg with two or three knives—but, strange to say, in all these cruel mutilations, scarce any one dies, though some of the sufferers are above sixty years of age; and the only remedy they use is, to put the wounded part immediately into water; and, after it has bled a little, wash it, and bind it up with linen cloths.”

Not so quietly did our friend To-ki take his sentence; on the contrary, he set up a yelling that almost shook the hall of audience. Suddenly, however, his eyes lighting upon Prabu and me, he burst into an hysterical laugh, and, falling at the feet of the chief, he exclaimed,—

“Thy slave, oh! great chief, claims the remission of his sentence!”

“What means the dog, is he possessed?” cried the chief, kicking the kneeling man.

“Claims it,” continued To-ki, “as his reward for giving into the great chief’s hands, rogues, traitors, for whose heads the Dutch chief at Batavia offers



a thousand dollars each. Let the great man cast his lightning glance upon those dogs," he added, pointing to us.

Unfortunately, the meaning of these words was but too intelligible to Martin and me, and we placed our hand upon our creeses.

"Resistance is useless, sahibs, submit ;" whispered Prabu.

"What means the Chinese dog? Who is this man that has come to us in the guise of a merchant and a sailor?"

"Prabu the slave, the descendant of the traitor Surapati," cried the Chinese.

Seeing the chief regarding him, as if in astonishment and unbelief, Prabu advanced, and with an air of dignity, said,—

"O great chief, this Chinese dog is a thief and a slayer of men for hire; but his words are good. I am he they call Prabu, the descendant of Surapati."

The chief arose, I thought, from the mild expression in his eye and general manner, to pay his obeisance to Prabu, but quickly, sharply he said,—

"Then art thou a traitor and a rebel to our good friends the Dutch— seize these dogs, and thy lives shall answer for their safety," he added to his guards. Whereupon we were all three secured, and taken at once to a small, dark fetid-smelling dungeon.

"It has come at last, I said it would," said Martin surlily, as the guards fastened the door after quitting us.

"What is written is written," was Prabu's answer.

"That's true, but it doesn't follow that it can't be scratched out."

"Shame, Martin!" I exclaimed, "we have long since accepted our position, it is cowardice to complain now."

"Well, well," he replied, good humouredly, "perhaps it is, Claud; still, to find oneself suddenly converted into a traitor, from no cause of his own, and with a fair prospect of being hanged, drawn, and quartered, or some such agreeable ending, is enough to make a fellow grumble. It is, as one may say, all he gets for his money. But come," he added, "let us bestir ourselves and think a little, for, among us, we may yet hit upon some plan of escape."

"Well, we did think, and that as silently and diligently as possible for some two or three hours; but then, taking stock of our thoughts, the result proved *nil*, and something like a feeling of despair stole over us."

"What's that?" exclaimed I, suddenly breaking a prolonged silence; and we all jumped to our feet. Ere, however, a word was spoken, the door turned upon its hinges, and the chief himself,

attended by a slave bearing a lantern, stood in the room.

Instinctively our hands sought the handles of our weapons ; but the chief, waving his hand, as if to assure us he intended no harm, bade the slave place the lantern upon the floor and quit the dungeon ; then, addressing Prabu, he said,—

“ Son of Surapati, I come to tell thee that thou and thy companions are free to depart. I did but have thee brought here for thine own safety. Thou wast publicly denounced by the Chinese dog, as one, for whose head the hated Hollanders have offered a reward, and thus was I compelled to appear thine enemy, for even in my own palace are there spies to be found.”

“ Chief,” replied Prabu with dignity—a greater dignity than I had ever seen him assume ; “ this is generous—noble ! but only what, from thy manner, I expected ; and well I guessed that a descendant of the once royal house of Mojopahit could keep but a hollow truce, a mock amity, with the hereditary foes of his race.”

“ Allah be praised,” replied the chief, “ that I have it in my power to preserve the sole descendant of the truest Javanese who ever lived ! But get thee at once from this place ; a guide and horses await you all at the entrance to the orest.”

“ How, O Prince,” exclaimed Prabu with asto-

nishment, "the prahu is a mere hull, but it will float us yet out of danger."

"Not so: a Dutch ship of war has, even within the last three hours, entered the harbour, and in the morning the captain will claim thee as his prisoner."

"But the prahu—the cargo, they are the property of his highness, thy sovereign and mine, and I may not desert them with life."

"Fear not," replied the prince, "for while in this port, by my treaty with the Dutch, they are mine. But," he added, "hasten, lose no time, and place this letter in the hands of his highness the Pangeran; it will acquit thee of all blame; nay, raise thee in his esteem."

A minute's reflection, and Prabu replied,—

"Chief, I cannot but believe thee, I consent; we will seek the forest, and there remain till this Dutch ship has taken her departure."

"Not so," replied the chief, "you must at once seek the Pangeran, who has quitted Pugar, and is now at Marang."

"God is great!" exclaimed Prabu, surprised, and not without cause, for Marang was several hundreds of miles nearer than Pugar, at which province he believed the Pangeran then to be. "But," he added, "the chief is right: I must at once seek the Pangeran."

"But suppose this is all a hoax," said Martin, with rude bluntness.

"Even then," replied Prabu coolly, "our danger will be no greater than now. It will be but the meeting with a similar misfortune by another means. Better fall by the hands of a treacherous Javanese than be slain by the dogs of Hollanders."

"A matter of taste, that; I should prefer the latter," replied my brother.

Then the chief, who, to my astonishment, instead of exhibiting the wild anger so common to his race, at the smallest insult, either fancied or real, merely smiled at the words.

"The young Sahib," he said, "must have suffered great misfortunes, for his heart to be so full of suspicion. But no more words, haste ye all," he added, as he opened the door and pointed to the guide, who, with four small horses, stood awaiting us at a little distance.

Once upon the back of my horse, or rather pony—for in Java there are no horses worthy of the name—I felt that we were safe; at the time, however, I but little imagined the labour we should have to urge the beasts through the brushwood and jungle; indeed, after an hour or two's coaxing, whipping, kicking with spurless heels, I became of Martin's opinion, who—wet through with perspiration, engendered by his endeavours to make his animal go at a little more than a sharp walking pace—exclaimed,—

"Oh, bother! an English donkey would be worth a dozen of these brutes! I tell you what, Claud, I believe we should save time by reversing our positions, and carrying these animals on our shoulders;" at which, by the way, Prabu administered a very proper rebuke.

"These horses," said he, "know their business better than the sahib Martin. They know that they have to traverse mountain and valley—through brushwood and jungle—and meet with tigers or snakes, therefore they are slow; but they are cautious and sure-footed."

"Ah!" replied my brother, "the old story of 'the tortoise and the hare.' Well, we must make the best of it."

But then his "making the best of it" consisted in goading his pony till, becoming restive, it literally "bolted," and, in its rage, regardless of the character Prabu had given him for sure-footedness, went, head-foremost, into the ruins of a huge tank, some twelve feet deep.

"My brother is killed!" I exclaimed, half-frightened out of my wits, as horse and rider suddenly disappeared into an abyss, which, for what I then knew, might be as deep as the chasm down which I had fallen in the caves.

"Not kill! *tank* all full of grass and brushwood," said the guide; and, to my great satisfaction, so it proved, for by the time we had reached

the edge of the tank Martin had clambered up its sides, and stood before us rubbing his limbs.

“The ill-tempered brute!” he exclaimed, as we came up to him. “But I hope he is not killed.”

“No, sahib; horse not kill!” replied our guide; and, dismounting, he jumped into the tank, and in less than half-an-hour we saw him leading the animal up a slope.

Onward again along the side of this great tank, which once supplied the inhabitants of Mojopahit; through the vast ruins of palaces and magnificent temples, overgrown with forest trees and jungle, where once had stood the classic city of Java—the seat of her ancient kings.

With awe and veneration I listened to the description Prabu gave us of the former greatness of Mojopahit; but scarcely with the same feelings did Prabu regard these ruins.

“God is great!” he exclaimed. Pointing to fragments of walls and pillars: “those were once the palaces and temples of pagans—but what is written *is* written—now they are the haunts of the beast of the field; and the faith of the Prophet is triumphant through the land!”

“But,” said I, as we rode onwards, “I have heard that it was to a Hindoo or Buddhist king of Mojopahit that Mahomedanism was indebted for its first introduction into Java.”

“Under Heaven and the Prophet it was!” he

replied. And then he told us the following pretty story :—

“About the year 1398 one Maulana Ibrahim, a holy man of Arabia, having heard that the people of so great an island were idolators, resolved to bring them over to the faith of the Prophet. Accordingly, accompanied by his daughter, one of the most beautiful women in the world, and a large retinue of attendants, he landed in the island. Once here, by the assistance of the Prophet, he succeeded in converting a great number of the poorer classes of people. But his heart yearned for the achievement of a greater victory—no less, indeed, than the conversion of Browijoyo, king of Mojopahit—the then principal state in Java.

“To effect this, he set out for the sovereign’s residence, having first sent his son to inform his majesty of the intended visit. Browijoyo having heard of the holiness of Maulana, set out to meet him, and receive him with all due honour ; but, upon their meeting, his majesty became highly offended with his visitor, for he presented him with a pomegranate in a very ordinary basket—and with reason was the king indignant, for that fruit, being one very common in Java, such a present was the height of meanness—and so the king left him, with feelings of great contempt, and Maulana returned to the place where he had first landed.

“No sooner, however, had the holy man de-



parted, than his majesty, being seized with a violent headache, mechanically stretched forth his hand for the sweet-smelling pomegranate, when, lo! instead of the delicious fruit, he found it was filled with magnificent rubies. Astonished at the sight, he sent a messenger to Maulana, begging of him to return, but the holy man declined, affording as an excuse, that his only daughter had just died. Pitying the bereaved parent, the king immediately went to him, to offer what consolation he might, and, moreover, desired to be permitted to see the dead girl, for he had heard of her wondrous beauty. This wish was gratified; but when the attendants lifted the veil from the body, the king became so dazzled with her beauty, that, falling upon his knees, he prayed aloud that his Gods would restore the soul of the girl to its lovely dwelling-place.

“‘Nay,’ cried Maulana, ‘call not upon *your* Gods; they are of gold and ivory, and cannot hear you; mine alone can lend a listening ear!’”

“The king then, yielding to a heavenly influence, addressed a prayer to the God of the true believers and Mahomed his Prophet! when, to the astonishment of all present, the dark circle round the eyes of the corpse began to fade gently away, her lips to assume the deep blush of the rose, a faint colour to tinge her cheeks, her long curled lashes were slowly raised, revealing her large dark eyes,—which they had thought closed for ever—and she

held out her hand to the king, who became a Mussulman on the spot, and married her." So far Prabu's legend. The true story, however, according to the Javanese writers, of the Mahomedan conversion, runs as follows :—

Among the wives of Browijoyo was a Chinese. This lady, being repudiated by the king, was, with her son, Raden Patah, sent to Arya Dama, chief of the Javanese colony of Palembang, in Sumatra, the inhabitants of which place had already embraced Islamism. Radan Patah, when he grew up, accompanied by Radan Husen, a son of Arya Dama by the second mother, went over to Java. Both the young men professed the faith of Mahomed; but while Radan Patah assumed the character of a zealot and a devotee, Radan Husen rested content with the promotion and other advantages he received at the court of the Hindoo king Browijoyo, who made him governor of a district, and gave him the command of his army.

Radan Patah, through the influence of his brother, was permitted to settle in the district of *Damak*; his conduct, however, creating some suspicion at Court, his brother paid him a visit, and prevailed upon him to make his appearance there, and pay the accustomed homage; in consequence of which the king not only pardoned him, but created him *Adapali*, or governor of *Damak*.

But no sooner did the new governor return to

the seat of his government than he began to intrigue for the subversion of the national worship; and, having at length succeeded in mustering a considerable force, he gave the command to a Javanese. This general, meeting the army of the king under Radan Husen, was defeated and slain. Radan Patah, however, not discouraged by this defeat, assembled a fresh army, and gave the command to Kudus, a son of the slain commander. The Hindoos and Mahomedans again met, the result being the defeat of the former, the capture and destruction of the ancient city of Mojopahit, and the ultimate triumph of Mahomedanism, which is *well ascertained* to have happened in the year 1478.

“It may be remarked,” says Crawford, “as a singular coincidence, that the Mahomedan religion was extending itself thus in Asia at the very time it was expelled from Europe; and it is curious to observe, that this important revolution was going forward nearly at the same moment with the grandest events in the history of man. Mojopahit was destroyed but fourteen years before the discovery of America, and but nine before Vasca di Gama doubled the Cape. It was a moment, indeed, when the nations of the world were becoming better acquainted with each other. The European reader, in reflecting upon this subject, will feel regret that the intolerant religion of Mahomed

should have anticipated the religion and civilization of a more polished and improved portion of mankind ; but that regret will be moderated when he considers the bigotry and cruelty of the *Portuguese*, the first adventurers, and the mean, pitiful, and cruel policy of their mercantile successors, the *Dutch*."

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THROUGH WOODS AND WILDS.

ONWARDS, onwards, for days, weeks; nay, more than two months we travelled through forests so dense, that without immense toil and a cunning guide they would have been impassable. Gigantic teak trees, thickets of colossal ferns, bamboos, rattans, the wild laurel, gum-trees—across rivers and perilous rapids, through valleys rendered deadly to man from the neighbourhood of those solfataros or semi-extinct volcanoes which, from the fume of carbonic acid gas escaping, asphyxiate all living creatures who dare to rest within its influence. Along the ridges of that immense volcanic range, named by travellers the blue mountains, and whose crests soar to a height of nine thousand feet above the level of the sea—by day seeking our food from the wild pigs, deer, and pheasants, which ever and anon crossed our path; by night two of us sleeping, within a circle of fire, lighted partly to preserve us from the

pestiferous damps, or prowling tigers, and fed with fuel by the other two, who kept watch and ward.

The journey was indeed painful, wearisome. Would it ever come to an end?—But another day and—hurrah! our hearts beat with joy, such a joy I had never felt. We had at length reached the neighbourhood of human habitations—the hand of man was visible around. We had entered a vast valley shut in by wooded hills, and moistened by pleasant brooks and rivers, the sides of which for miles were studded with trees in groves. We had in fact come to a sago plantation, and thus knew that a village or town must be at hand—a few miles more along the banks of the widest of the streams, and we had reached a little village of huts, which we afterwards found formed a kind of outpost to the city of Marang itself. Speedily our toils were forgotten in the warm hospitality of the natives, who regaled us with their choicest fruits, coffee, and sago cakes, and, greatest luxury of all, after so long a sojourn in the wilds, sleeping mats and pillows, to say nothing of a separate hut, which the headman of the village, who constituted himself our host, had placed at our disposal.

Now, as I have told you, it is the custom in Java for the women to do all the field work; accordingly, they quit their huts at a very early hour of the day. But the morning after reaching

the village, when we left our sleeping hut, we were surprised to see both women and men idling about, and tricked out in their best finery.

"What is the meaning of all this, is it a jollification day, I wonder?" asked Martin of Prabu; but the latter, as if no less surprised, addressing the headman, our host, asked,—

"What day is this, oh my brother?"

"Can my elder brother have suddenly fallen from the moon, that he knows not that this is the twelfth of the month of *Rabbi ul awal*?"\*

"Allah! and the Prophet pardon a miserable wretch for having forgotten it," exclaimed Prabu, adding very truly, "but we must have lost our reckoning of time in the wilds, for I thought it wanted two more days to it. But Allah be thanked that we are yet in time for the festival."

"My elder brother," replied the headman, "has committed no sin, for the day has only come, not passed; but," he added, "let my brother attire himself fittingly, and accompany my party to Marang, for the day will be a great one, greater than usual, to do honour to the newly arrived envoy from the unbelieving Dutch chief at Batavia."

"When, O my elder brother, did this Dutch envoy arrive in Marang?" asked Prabu, with

\* The alleged anniversary of the birth and death of the Prophet.

evident vexation, if not fear, depicted upon his countenance.

“Three days since. It is believed that it was to receive this Hollander, his highness the Pangeran left Pugar, and came to his great palace of Marang.”

“Will the Hollander attend the ceremonies at the palace?” asked Prabu.

“It is not known, but if my elder brother and his two friends will join our party they will see,” replied the headman, and then again he offered to lend us the holiday attire of villagers that we might make an appropriate appearance, and to don these we went into his house.

“I say, Prabu,” said Martin while we were attiring ourselves, “isn’t it a little fool-hardy for us, and you especially, to venture too near this Dutchman; won’t it be to walk into the lion’s mouth?”

“Not so, sahib; he will not recognize us, even if he has ever seen us before, for he cannot dream that we are in this part of the island.”

“But why go at all into the city until this envoy has quitted it, if there be any danger?” I asked.

“Because, Sahib Claud,” replied Prabu, sternly, “there is treachery at work in a quarter where I least expected to find it, and I must scent it out; still, if the sahibs fear, they can remain here.”

But the latter suggestion we would not listen to,



and so we were soon on our way with the villagers, and upon the road to the city we were joined by many hundreds of others, all journeying to witness the grand reception of the chief nobles by their Prince. But as this ceremony takes place annually, a general description of it must suffice.

At an early hour of the day, each chief, accompanied by his retainers attired in their gala dresses and fully armed, and attended by drums and other musical instruments, proceed to the great square of the palace, there to await the coming of their Prince. I must here premise that every portion of the ceremony is an outrage upon Mahomedan decorum, as established at least in other countries; but then the Javanese, although followers of the prophet, are extremely lax in all religious matters. When the Prince makes his appearance, it is in the idolatrous garb of his Hindoo ancestors, decorated with ponderous golden bracelets, armlets, and finger rings set with diamonds. His retinue consists of persons whimsically dressed in the ancient costume of Java, including a great number of women, a strange contradiction to the fastidiousness of the Mahomedans of other countries. The most conspicuous of the latter are his Highness's ladies of the household—these bear the ancient regalia. The latter by the way, according to the English notion of regalia, is somewhat extraordinary, consisting, for instance, of old creeses,

the golden figures of a snake, a goose, and a deer ; —equally curious is the regalia of the Prince of Macassar or Celebes, which consists of the Book of the laws of God, the fragment of a small gold chain, a pair of Chinese dishes, an *enchanted* stone, a pop-gun, some creeses and spears; and, above all, a *revered* weapon, called *sudang* ; *i. e.*, a kind of cleaver or hanger, the object of which, according to the naked language of the people themselves, is to *rip open bellies*. But to return to the Java prince.

After the ladies came several old women, bearing arms in their hands, called *langan-astru*, very appropriately too, for the meaning is *soldiers in play*. The Prince, having arrived at the Sitingil, or terrace of *ceremonies*, takes his seat upon the throne, the chiefs of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, squatting on the bare ground, the heir to the throne only being admitted to a higher seat. The troops of all descriptions, whether those of the household, or the rabble militia of the princes, then pass before the Prince in review, moving mostly according to the manners of the country, in a strutting or dancing attitude, and exhibiting costumes the most grotesque and ludicrous. Some appear in ancient dress, others in the more modern garb of the country. One portion of the ceremony consists of a public charity according to the institution of the Prophet. This consists of dressed

food, chiefly rice, piled up into a conical mass, of four or five feet high, tastefully decorated with flowers, and each mass supported in a separate litter, borne amidst the sounds of a hundred bands of native music by porters dressed for the occasion. From their shape and size, and still more, because they are thought to be emblematic of the bounty of the sovereign, these masses of food are emphatically and figuratively denominated mountains.

The method of distributing these viands is as curious as it is, to say the least, ungracious; for, after being duly exhibited in the procession, the mountains are carried to the houses of the nobles of rank, according to their size and qualities, and being thrown down in their courtyards, there ensues, among the retainers of the chiefs, an indecent but amicable scramble for them.

There is, however, one portion of the festivities that seriously outrages the institutions of the Prophet. It is at the latter part of the day, when wine is served plentifully, and the Prince quaffs some half a dozen bumpers off to the health of his good friends and allies. Now, this latter ceremony was the only portion of the festival to which we could not be eye-witnesses, as it took place in the banqueting-hall of the palace, and in the presence only of the guests and attendants. It appeared, however, to be the only portion that

Prabu was very desirous of witnessing. To do this, he offered a bribe to one of the principal slaves, but as it would have been at the risk of his life, the man refused. Thus he was obliged to wait in the city till the conclusion of the banquet, and then content himself with its description from the mouth of one of the attendants. This the man did very circumstantially and tediously, and Prabu listened attentively for some time, but at the sentence—"and then his Highness, taking a flagon of wine in both hands, stood up, and drank it to the dregs to the health of the Dutch envoy, and his masters, the Government at Batavia, between whom and himself there was, and ever had been, a good and completely peaceful understanding"—our captain, losing all self-control, gnashed his teeth, and clutched the handle of his creese, exclaiming,—

"False-hearted tyrant and coward, he has betrayed his country!"

But the astonishment depicted upon the countenance of the reciter of the speech at such treasonous words restored him to his self-possession, and, taking the man by the shoulder, he said,—

"A long journey has made me mad. Not a word of this to a living soul, as you value your life, for"—the rest he whispered in his ear.

"The son of Surapati," exclaimed the man, and

stricken and falling upon his knees, he added—  
“Allah be praised! the people, oh, prince! wail thee as dead, or, worse, in the power of the Dutch.”

Then dismissing him with a wave of his hand, Prabu said to us,—

“Now, Sahib, you return to the village, I will remain; but before I lay my head upon my pillow this night, I must have speech with this Pangeran.”

“Madness, Prabu!” I cried; “for if he has betrayed your cause, he will deliver you into the hands of this envoy.”

“Even this attendant may betray you,” said Martin.

“Go not, I pray—it is a wild scheme.”

“It is not madness—it is wisdom,” he replied, coolly.

“Sahib Martin,” he added, “no native-born subject of this prince will betray the son of Surapati,” so saying he left us, and we returned with our host, the headman, and his people to the village.

Now, notwithstanding Prabu’s confidence in the wisdom of his seeking an interview that evening with the prince, my brother and I felt seriously alarmed for his safety. “For,” said Martin, “if this prince, who has for some time past been plotting against the Government, has patched up

a peace with the latter, like all Asiatic tyrants in general, he will not scruple to betray his recent friends."

"I fear it may be so, Martin; yet let us hope the best. Prabu is not wanting in cunning; he would not wantonly and without some great object thrust his head into the lion's jaws. After all, this warm welcome given to the envoy, and professions of amity with his master, may be but a *ruse* on the part of the Prince to gain time—who knows?"

"Who knows indeed?" repeated Martin. And for three or four hours we sat thus conversing and cogitating, till at length, fairly worn out with fatigue, I proposed that we should stretch ourselves upon our mats, as there seemed but little probability that the subject of our thoughts would return that night.

"True, Claud," replied my brother, "I do not think he will return to-night—still, I don't like sleeping before I know the result of his interview."

"Suppose the Prince has caused him to be seized, Martin." But at the same moment the door of the hut flew open, and Prabu stood before us, not only free and unharmed, but with every mark of satisfaction upon his countenance.

"Thank God, you are safe!" exclaimed my brother.

"Allah be praised for *all* things!" he replied. "But," he added, "what harm *could* happen to the son of Surapati in the palace of the Pangeran of Pugar and Marang?"

"Then his Highness is still thy friend?" I said.

"He is more, Sahib—he is a true-hearted Javanese; for which Allah be for ever praised!"

"Yet," said Martin, incredulously, "he is giving a warm welcome to the envoy of his greatest enemies."

"Sahib," he replied, "there are some things that may not be poured into every ear—this is one of them."

"A satisfactory reply, truly," replied Martin. "I tell you what," he added, "this prince has been found out, and is thus compelled to **make** terms with the Dutch."

"It matters not—it matters not," replied Prabu, "the storm has passed over, yet the thunder is still in the air, the bolt ready to fall. But," he added, as if anxious to get rid of an unpleasant subject, "has the sahib Martin forgotten his cousin?"

"Prabu," replied my brother, firmly, "you know I have not. Placing full reliance upon your promise to restore her to us, I have not since mentioned her name. But why that question? You are not one to utter idle words. Is she in this city? In Heaven's name, tell me."

“Let the sahib stretch his patience to a length of three more days, and Prabu’s promise shall be fulfilled.”

“Three days!” repeated Martin, bitterly, “why not to-morrow?”

“It cannot be: to-morrow the Prince and the envoy attend a great tiger-hunt.”

“Then she *is* in the power of this *Prince*?”

“I *said* not so, Sahib; but rest content—my words have gone forth, and shall not prove idle wind. In the meanwhile, know that she is well cared for and happy.”

This information was good, but it was tantalizing, and filled us with anxiety—an anxiety, indeed, that would have been unbearable had we not possessed such entire confidence in the integrity of Prabu. Then the latter, guessing our thoughts and feelings, said,—

“The sahib Martin longs to join in a tiger-hunt. Treachery disappointed him in Bali. He shall go with the hunters to-morrow.”

“Bother! my mind is occupied with other things,” was the surly reply. But the next minute he said: “What must be, must, and I suppose *I must* go. You go, of course, Claud, for it will at least serve to divert our thoughts.”

And to this I consented, although such scenes have no attraction for me.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### WE HUNT TIGERS, AND DISCOVER SOME OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

It was late, very late, when we awoke the next morning.

“The sun is already high in the heavens,” said Prabu. “Hasten; as it is we shall not reach the hunting-party in time to set out with them.”

“Bother, how we have slept! Why did you not arouse us earlier?” said Martin.

However in a very short time we had finished our breakfast, and with our rifles (which, by the way, the chief of Mojopahit had thoughtfully provided for us) slung across our backs, and our creeses in our girdles, we were urging our slow but sure-footed ponies in the direction of Marang. But unfortunately the place of rendezvous was a full mile on the other side of the city. Thus, upon reaching it, we were mortified to find that the Pangeran and his party had started nearly two hours before. It was vexatious, for Prabu was

ignorant of the route ; fortunately, however, we procured a guide, and off we started. Our course lay through a country as wild as that through which we had travelled some days before ; and never do I remember seeing so much game in so short a time : bustards, cranes, jackals, foxes, and even wild buffaloes, and pigs, were either in our path, or to be seen upon all sides.

“Far better remain here, and bag a few of these animals, Martin, than run the risk of getting our necks beneath a tiger’s claws.”

“Perhaps so,” he replied ; “but I have long wished to see a tiger hunt, and, therefore, I for *one* won’t lose so good an opportunity, but onwards. Do urge on that worse than donkey of yours, old fellow !”

Onward we went ; beating as we went the bushes, dank weeds, long grass, and jungle ; at times trampling upon snakes—at another narrowly escaping being gored by a wild pig we startled out of a comfortable nap. Then, in some of the open places, near pools of standing water, we fell in at last with the footmarks of tigers, by which we knew that we were on the right track. After a ride of ten miles, and as we were descending the slope of a hill, we caught sight of the hunting-party. They had halted in a plain covered with high jungle-grass and thick bushes.

“They have found the tigers,” cried Prabu.

"Quick!" but greatly as we increased our speed, we were not in time for the beginning of the hunt. We saw, however, their plan of action. The spearmen, about a hundred in number, were distributed in a circle around an immense thicket, and, sprinkled among them, were men with drums, tom-toms, and many other *un*musical instruments.

"Who are in those howdahs, Prabu?" I asked, pointing to three elephants, which stood in line with their tails towards us, and at intervals of a hundred yards each.

"That to the left," he replied, "contains the Dutch envoy, the next holds the Pangeran, and the other, which is nearest those teak trees and with the spearmen-guard around, contains the chief ladies of his Highness's household."

"Very good," said Martin; "then, as we have no especial desire to run into the lion's jaws, or, in other words, catch the eye of his Excellency the Dutchman, we will advance by the ladies' elephant."

But as he spoke the drums were beaten, and the spearmen began to narrow their circle, till they were near enough to the thicket to thrust their weapons into it; at the same time, eager to be nearer the scene of action, the envoy and Pangeran moved forward their elephants till their chests touched the prickly canes. *We* rested for a minute to watch their movements.

Suddenly the spearmen gave a terrific yell, and

beating their way into the thicket, were soon lost to view. The prince and envoy followed; the huge beasts upon which they sat forcing their own way by the strength and bulk of their bodies.

"They have started a whole den," cried Prabu; "the tigers will be out either at the back or the front. Follow! but," he added, "they may come out at this side—be wary—reserve your fire till the last moment!" Having given this caution he gallantly dashed forward, and entered the thicket through the opening made by the elephants.

"Come on, Claud; don't lag! This is fine sport!" cried Martin.

We set our ponies at a canter, and made for an opening about a dozen yards to the left of that entered by Prabu, having no desire to get up with the elephants and their riders, but at the very entrance the animals stood stock still, with their fore legs stretched forward, and began to snort, and tremble from their backs to their hoofs.

"The beasts scent an enemy, Martin; dismount."

In an instant we were upon our feet, and the animals, taking advantage of the change, turned tail and scampered off in a style that somewhat astonished us, after our experience of their regulation speed.

"It is my opinion we have done a foolish act," said I, chagrined at the escape of the horses.

"More foolish to remain half-way. Onward, through the thicket, Claud," replied my brother.

But a terrific growl, and a huge tigress, with a spear through her shoulder, leaped forth, and miraculously *passed* us. In her rage, and probable pain, no less than fear at the great number of her enemies, she darted by unheedingly of two such puny hunters as ourselves; but suddenly she stopped to attack a nobler prey—the elephant with the ladies on its back! The spearmen guard fled like cowards, as they were—then slaying the poor mahout with a single blow of her paw, the savage cat, gnashing her teeth, roaring and foaming with rage, leaped upon the elephant's back, clinging with her huge claws to the frail howdah.

"The women! the women!—to their rescue!" shouted my brother.

I was, for the moment, bewildered; and, clutching his arm, cried,—

"Stay!—for Heaven's sake, stay! It would be madness to go!"

"Stand by, Claud!" he replied, fiercely, shaking me off—"it would be *cowardice* to remain here!" and, running up to the elephant, he took quick aim—too quick, for the bullet but grazing its sides, the beast, hearing the approach of its new enemy, crouched down, lashed her tail with fury, and gave one sharp long growl. Martin drew his creese, but it would have been as useless as a

bodkin to have preserved his life, had not a bullet from my rifle caused the animal to reel over; taking instant advantage of this, my brother again and again plunged his weapon into its sides. The brute being killed, we clambered to the assistance of the shrieking women within the howdah. Tearing aside the curtains, we saw two girls, half dead with fright, supporting the form of another. But at the sight of that other, I exclaimed,—

“Thank God, Martin, *you* were *no* coward!”

“Marie, Marie!—our cousin! She is lifeless—perhaps, dying! Water, Claud, water!” but it was unnecessary, she had but swooned, for reviving, she took a hand of each, saying,—

“My cousins, my dear cousins! Heaven alone must have sent you to our aid. It was at your peril I fainted. But the princess?” she said, turning to one of her companions.

“Is, thanks to these brave sahibs, dear Marie, unharmed.”

“How is it that *you* are here in this howdah? Who are these ladies?” asked Martin, very savagely, for, as he afterwards told me, he feared that all three were the wives of the Pangeran.

“Dear Martin, “she replied, “you frighten me with that fierce look. These ladies are the daughter of the prince and her attendants, and I am here as the friend and companion of the princess. But,

my dear cousin, how rejoiced am I to see you, for they told me you were dead."

"Dead!" he replied, as fiercely as before; "no, not at all dead!—but, I tell you, Marie, I either soon shall be, or take you from such heathen companionship. But, dear Marie, what is this prince like?—is he young or old?—good-natured or cruel? How is it that you are in his household?"

"I don't know, Martin. I have never seen him."

"Don't know!—have never seen him?" repeated my brother, incredulously.

"No," she replied; "but I shall now for the first time. See, he is coming towards us; some of the slaves have warned him of his daughter's danger."

It had been as Marie surmised; warned of his child's peril, the Pangeran had dismounted from his elephant, and taking an attendant's horse, now came galloping up to us. The slain mahout—the dead tiger—his daughter and her companions apparently in close converse, at once told him the story of her late peril, and to whom he was indebted for her present safety.

"Allah be praised! my daughter is safe," he exclaimed. "To the brave young sahibs, whoever they are, I am indebted for the preservation of her dear life; let them ask what they will that it is in my power to bestow, it shall not be refused." But gazing upon him as he spoke, we were astonished.

It would be impossible to describe the surprise expressed upon the features of Marie and my brother.

“By jingo, it's Madame Ebberfeld's cousin the Prince ; we are then in the very heart of the conspiracy,” said Martin. The Prince in his turn surprised at the words, said,—

“Who, then, are you, who speak so glibly of Madame Ebberfeld, and her cousin the Prince?” Then, as if suddenly remembering our features, he exclaimed,—

“Ah, I see—God is great ! the brave sahibs are Madame's nephews.”

“We *are*,” replied Martin, firmly, “and *you* are the man, then, who stole away our cousin ; but you have said that you could refuse us nothing ; give us, then, at once our cousin, and we will forgive you all the past.”

“The young Sahib is hasty, let him bridle his impatience till we return to the palace.”

“No, not I, you are evading my request ; I will not budge an inch till you have promised that we may take her from this place when we choose,” and the foolish fellow held his naked creese in his hand, as if ready to defy the Pangeran and all his retainers. To my astonishment, the Prince, although he at first bit his nether lip with vexation, only smiled at this Captain Bobadil style of proceeding. Many of the natives, however, who



had by this time flocked around, placed their hands upon their creeses, and their eyes upon those of their master; a single glance from the latter, and there would have been a speedy termination to the Quixotic Martin's career. But that glance was not given, the Prince mildly begged that he would be patient, and that as soon as he had communicated with Mynheer Ebberfeld, Marie's guardian, she should be delivered to us. But this reply added fuel to the fire: it nearly drove my brother frantic.

"Mynheer Ebberfeld," he exclaimed, "is a rogue; he it was who caused her to be stolen away. No, Prince," he added, "you may kill me, if you will; it will be a grateful return for the preservation of your daughter's life, but I will not budge from here, nor permit my cousin either, until the envoy comes up; he is a Dutchman, and powerful, and although he may seize upon me as an associate of the enemies of his Government, I will demand my cousin at his hands."

"Then, if the young Sahib will not be patient, I must," replied the Pangeran good-humouredly; "we will await here the coming of the envoy; but the Hollander, with haste and impatience like unto your own, young man, quitted his elephant, and proceeded into the jungle on foot with the spearmen. But what means this—what has happened?" he exclaimed, as with a strange yelling

noise a party of spearmen, headed by Prabu, came through the thicket, bearing what appeared to be the body of a man upon an improvised litter formed by their spears.

As they approached, the Prince and his party became silent—silent as death in breathless suspense, but when the litter was set upon the earth his Highness exclaimed,—

“God is great, it is the envoy, dead or sadly wounded.”

“Not dead,” murmured the wounded man, “thanks to the brave Prabu, who saved me from the tiger’s jaws, and so insured me at least Christian burial—yet dying.” But as he fixed his fast closing eyes first upon the howdah, and then upon Martin and me, he exclaimed,—

“But yon girl, what does she here at this moment?—those young men, what demon hath brought them to witness my punishment?” He swooned from pain and loss of blood, which was gushing from the wounds in his neck and chest, made by the tiger’s claws. Need my reader be told that in the Dutch envoy we saw

**MYNHEER EBBERFELD.**

The conspiracy against us three cousins was being gradually unravelled, but the suffering of our enemy made us forget our enmity.

"We can hate no longer, Claud, for God hath taken unto himself the punishment of the robber of the orphan."

"But we can do more, my cousins," said Marie, and slipping down the side of the elephant before we could even go to her aid, she ran to the dying man, and, kneeling, added, "We can forgive, for we are Christians."

"Marie," exclaimed Martin, as, going forward, he and I knelt by her side, "you have taught us our duty; let us pray God to pardon this dying sinner."

What must have been the feelings of that bad man, as, recovering from his swoon, he saw kneeling and praying to God for his forgiveness, the orphans he had so deeply injured, I know not; but with his last breath he said,—

"Marie, I have heard of angels—surely you must be akin to them, for you pray for me who ruined you. Boys! had I lived another month, your whole fortune would also have been lost to you; Prince," he added, turning to the Pangeran, "to thee as to all I have been false, examine the papers in my house, and you will see that had Heaven extended my life another moon, you would have been sacrificed; but I ask not *your* forgiveness, it is not in the nature of a Javanese to pardon so great an enemy."

At this but too plain intimation of his treachery

towards himself, the Pangeran gnashed his teeth but the sight of three young people in prayer for the forgiveness of their direst enemy softened even *his* savage nature.

“Ebberfeld, thou bold, bad man,” he said, taking his hand, “thou art wrong even in this ; there is no nature so savage that may not be taught by good deeds ; even I forgive thee, for the voice of Allah speaks to my heart through the lips of these children.”

But Mynheer spoke no more—he had died ; and let us hope in such a thorough heartfelt repentance that his soul passed into the keeping of his Creator. But enough of this sorry scene and sad ending to that day’s sport for which Martin had so long wished ; such an ending, however, is not an uncommon one in the East, but then hunters are more prone to describe their victories than their defeats. But there were two other sufferers by the day’s hunting—the poor mahout who had been slain by the tiger, and the noble elephant. It was with difficulty we could coax the beast from the body of his late friend and master. His almost human sorrow reminded me of a story I had once read, and which I must be pardoned for repeating here.

“A tiger having attacked a party who were travelling in a howdah, and slain the mahout or driver, the elephant slew the beast with his feet ;

but the noble animal had not saved his friend, so, says the narrator, he became abstracted in gloomy contemplation, and gazed with more than human sympathy upon the dying mahout. He noticed us not! and as his eye fell on the dead tiger, he stamped, looked fierce, and made a trumpeting noise as if in triumph at having avenged his friend's death! Then, as if remembering he had avenged, but not saved, his ears and trunk drooped, and though he himself was torn and bleeding, his moist and thoughtful eye gave token that all his feelings were absorbed in grief for him he had lost. He stood over and watched the men who were making a kind of litter for the purpose of carrying away the dead man, with the anxiety and grief of the most affectionate of friends, nor would he touch food for some days afterwards. Truly I could never tire of relating anecdotes of this noble creature."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

AND LAST, CONTAINING A TOLERABLY HAPPY  
ENDING.

UPON his return to the palace, to which place we accompanied him, the Pangeran gave Marie permission to choose her day of departure, further promising to send an escort with her to Batavia.

“That will be as soon as my cousins are prepared to set out,” she replied quickly.

“Then the day is distant, for the Sahibs dare not—it would be unwise—entrust themselves in Batavia until we hear in what odour they stand with the Dutch Government; but let them rest content beneath this roof until I can send a messenger, who will prove to his Excellency that their association with Prabu and his crew was from accident, not design.”

“Be it distant or near, Prince,” replied Marie, “I will not enter Batavia without them.”

“Be it so,” replied the Pangeran; “in the mean-

time, let the preservers of my daughter's life regard themselves as my sons beneath this roof;" and then we parted for the night, waiting until the next day for explanations.

"Now, Marie," said I, the following morning, when we were all together, "tell us the story of your adventures since our parting."

"Oh!" she replied, "there is not much to tell. Well, of course I was terribly frightened when that old hunchback, the snake-charmer, entered my room, and, without a word, bandaged my eyes and carried me off; but as we went through the streets of the city, he spoke kindly words, telling me I had no harm to fear if I would not attempt to get away; and I really believe he meant what he said: but when taking me to a house, and pushing me into a room, he desired me to change my dress for another that I should find at hand, and to be careful to leave also my *watch, locket, and purse*, I had no doubt that both robbery and murder was his intention, and I prayed and cried, and cried and prayed terribly.

"I now see how Mynheer came by the jewels and clothes; it was a cunning conspiracy," said Martin.

"Why, what did *he* say about them?" she asked.

"He produced them as a proof that you had been drowned, for he told us they had been found in the river," said I.

“The cruel, bad man! then he was at the bottom of it all : he wanted to get my fortune ! But,” she continued, “my fears were groundless, for as soon as I had changed my attire, he came into the room, and, re-bandaging my eyes, led me forth and set me before him upon a horse. In that manner we journeyed many, many miles, till we came to the foot of the mountain, where were several savage-looking men, evidently waiting to receive me, for no sooner did we come up with them than they placed me upon another horse, and so we travelled over mountains, across rivers, and through forests, sometimes sleeping under a small tent, which they carried with them for my sole use, at others in the huts of villages ; and thus, after many weeks, we arrived at a large palace, and then I soon began to forget my trouble, for I was introduced into the apartments of that sweet princess, with whom I soon became on the most intimate terms ; but, notwithstanding our friendship, she would never (she said she dared not) tell me in what part of Java the palace was situated, to whom it belonged, or for what reason I had been stolen away from home. Well, in that palace I remained many months, being permitted every liberty and luxury within its walls, and those of its gardens, but never being allowed to pass without, or to be in the presence of one of the slaves, whom it might be possible to coax any information from,



without the presence of the princess, my friend, or one or two of her devoted attendants. At length one day—not seemingly more than three months since—the princess told me that her father, the Pangeran, whoever he might be, was about to remove, with the whole of his household, to another palace, some hundreds of miles away. This mattered but little to me, so long as the princess was with me, for it would be but a change of residence, and so I cheerfully prepared for and set out on the journey. As I expected, when we arrived here, I found but little difference in our mode of life. One day, however, I did manage to elude the vigilance of the princess and her ladies, and hold a conversation with one of the female slaves. I learned from her two pieces of information: one, that my host or gaoler was the Pangeran of Marang; another, that an envoy, a Dutchman, was then in the city, and that, for his Excellency's amusement, the Pangeran had ordered a tiger-fight. At this news, I, who had become domesticated in the palace, and had not for a long time either thought or desired to escape, began to pant for my liberty—liberty to go back even to that bad home in Batavia. Disguising my real intention, I confessed to the princess that I had discovered who her father was, and also about the intended tiger-fight. I knew it must be a horrid, dreadful sight, but I thought if I could persuade the princess to

take me with her in her howdah, that we might by chance get near the Dutch envoy ; and in such an event, I had fully resolved to beg of him to set me at liberty—to take me back with him to Batavia ; but little did I imagine that I should be pleading for liberty to the very man who had taken it from me ! Well, so earnestly did I beg of my princess to let me accompany her, that she consented, and I went ; and now I have told you my adventures. They are not very frightful, are they ? nor very romantic either—only a little girl you know kept out of the way while her uncle-in-law could spend all her money ! ”

“ Indeed, dear Marie, I fear it is but too true that he *has* spent it, for did he not confess that he had ruined you.”

“ Then, Martin, I shall have to work for my living, that is all. I will be a governess, or a companion, to one of the Dutch ladies in Batavia.”

“ No, Marie,” replied my brother, impatiently, “ Claud and I have money ; you shall share it, as you have a right : it has been left to us by your father ; and then we will all return to dear old England, for you, like ourselves, have many relations there.

‘ Martin,’ said I, “ you forget that we are even now, perhaps, regarded by the Dutch Government

as rebels; if so, we have no fortunes; they have been, or will be, confiscated;" and, with a bitter laugh, my brother replied,—

"Let us wait till we hear from Batavia, and don't prophesy evil, you old witch, for it is sure to come true."

"Well, then, I now prophesy that, in spite of all dark clouds above us, we shall *not* be punished as rebels—that our fortunes are not, will not be confiscated."

"The sahib Claud has prophesied correctly," said Prabu, who, unobserved by any, had been standing in the doorway some few minutes.

"What mean you, Prabu?" we asked.

"I will read this," he replied, showing us a letter in the Javanese character.

He did—it was from the friendly Chief or Prince of Mojopahit, containing a warning to Prabu to beware of venturing near any district under the influence of the Dutch Governor-General, as his Excellency had issued a free pardon to all of the followers of Prabu, calling himself the descendant of Surapati. But for Prabu himself another reward, in addition to that already issued, had been offered for his capture or death.

"True," said Martin, thoughtfully, "if we have ever been counted among the rebels, this includes our pardon; but," he added, "now more than ever,

my brave friend, am I inclined to remain by thy side."

"Sahib Martin," replied Prabu, kindly, but firmly, "you must not, shall not remain with one who may be hunted through the length and breadth of Java. You have youth, health, and hope. It may be written that your life shall be long, happy, and prosperous. With Prabu the future is blank. His degenerate countrymen have again made their peace with their enslavers. He has outlived Javan honour and patriotism. But," he added, fiercely, "the day may and will come when the hated Hollanders shall be driven into the sea. It might have been now—the time was ripe—but for that dog!" Then, his anger lashed to fury, he cried, "Would that he were alive again to fall by my creese!"

"Better," said I, "that he is no more;" for I knew that he alluded to Ebberfeld.

"The sahib is right—it is," he replied, in subdued tones; "for had the dog lived another month, he would have betrayed his Highness the Pangeran into the hands of the vile Dutch."

"But how?" said I; "was he not here for the purpose of cementing firmly the new peace and friendship between the Dutch Government and the Pangeran?"

"That was the *supposed* purport of his coming;

but listen, and you will learn the real object. It was to watch till the Pangeran committed some overt act that might be construed into a just cause for robbing him of his dominions. I tell you, Sahib, this dog Ebberfeld did but join the patriots to worm themselves into our secrets, to fan the rising flame and then to betray them. And if, in the first instance, he *was* led to join us by his hatred to the Dutch, a ready pardon, and the promise of half the Pangeran's wealth, was to be his reward for his treachery."

"But how know you all this?" I asked.

"Partly," he replied, "from this letter from the Prince of Mojopahit, chiefly from papers found last night in his house. Allah forgive him! his sins were many."

"Now, Prabu, one question. What reason could you have for keeping secret from us so long our cousin's whereabouts?"

"It was the Pangeran's secret, Sahib. He wanted money, and Ebberfeld proposed the abduction of Marie, that he might inherit her fortune. It was a sin, but he has atoned for it—neither has harm or even discomfort happened to her while under his roof."

"It was a black business, though," said Martin. "Nevertheless," he added, "'all's well that ends well,' and so we will say no more about it. But

now, Prabu, you have not told us what you intend doing."

"Seek service with the truest of Indian islanders, the Rajah of Blilling, in Bali, for he and his race are free men; their soil is unstained by the feet of European conquerors. There will I bide my time, as all must who believe that the day will come when the Dutch hucksters will be driven from Java."

Reader, I have nearly done. I have only to add that, within a week, laden with presents from the Pangeran, we were on our road to Batavia. Upon our arrival in that city, we found that Madame Ebberfeld, having heard of her husband's death, had made arrangements to again enter the bonds of matrimony within a week. At this, I may tell you that I was not at all surprised, as it is not at all unusual to find ladies among the Colonists who have married ten or twelve husbands.

In conclusion: By the interest of one of our uncle's old friends, at the time appointed by his will we obtained our fortunes; and upon the invitation of a sister of my father's who resided in Wales, we left Batavia and came to England, where we have remained ever since—that is now many years ago.

By way of postscript, perhaps, the reader may

like to know that I am even now living under the roof of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Black, and that Marie and her husband spend many a long evening in chatting with their bachelor brother anent our adventures in Java and the Indian Archipelago.

THE END.

*This day,*

ARTHUR MERTON.

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